In the Time of The Pharaohs

Alexandre Moret

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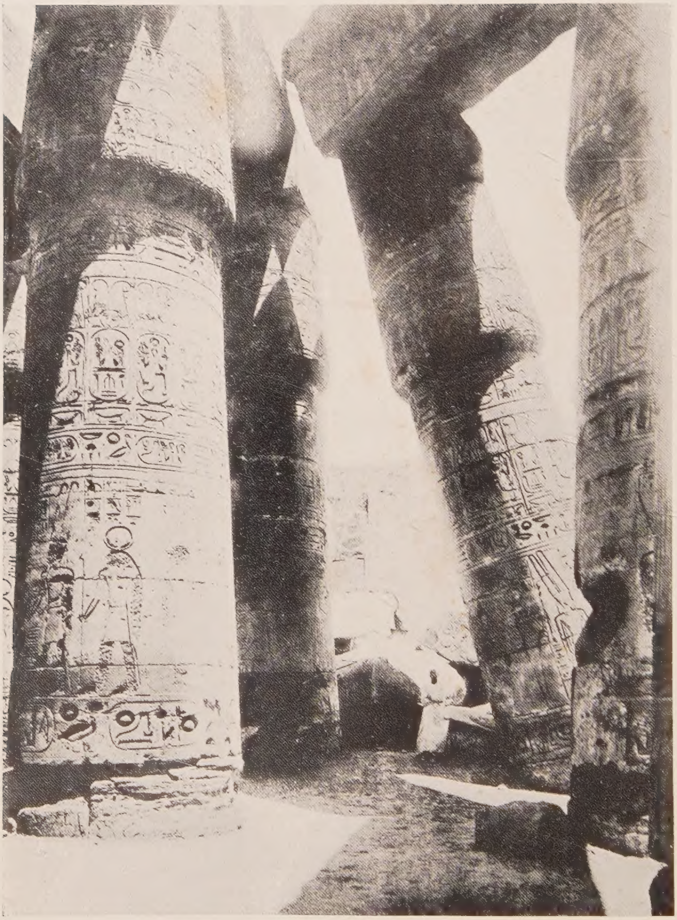

Hypostyle Hall—The Leaning Column.

Plate I.

IN THE TIME OF THE PHARAOHS

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

MME. MORET

WITH 16 PLATES AND A MAP

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PREFACE

The following articles grouped under the heading *In the Time of the Pharaohs* are without any apparent connection. They first appeared in the well-known French magazine, *Revue de Paris*, and were written expressly with the intention of initiating the French public at large into a branch of history and archæology as yet dealt with only by a very small number of specialists, whose researches appear in scholarly publications that are not readily accessible to the layman. Hence the need of presenting the subject in non-technical language. The Review above mentioned asked the author of this book to give a popular account of the interesting but complicated problems in Egypt raised by the discoveries of the last ten or fifteen years; the task was not an easy one because there are hardly any subjects that have as yet reached the point where technical discussion can be dispensed with and also because it is difficult as yet to speak with finality. In his account of prehistoric Egypt, and elsewhere in

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the volume, the author has alluded to theories and views that have already been superseded, but that are nevertheless interesting, inasmuch as they exemplify the difficulties scholars have to face, and give some indication of the amount of work that remains to be done in Egyptology, a new science that is greatly in need of students and that has rewards in store for those who work conscientiously.

The author's statements are the outcome of several investigations in Egypt undertaken on behalf of the French Government, and of an unbiassed study of original documents; he tried to gather together every scrap of information contributed by later investigations in order to bring his statements down to date. He hopes that the following papers will be of service to the ever-increasing number of tourists visiting Egypt, enabling them to form an acquaintance with the religion and moral ideas of the ancient Egyptians, and putting them in touch with our present knowledge of Eastern history. It is also hoped that this book may be useful to students of general history, and of philosophy, as well as to those interested in Biblical research. As every source has been carefully indicated in the footnotes, this book may also serve as a supplement to the various histories of Egypt that are in use at the present time, for these histories touch upon some points that require re-examination in the light of new documents, and do not give any attention to others.

I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable service rendered me by my wife in translating this book and my thanks are due to her also for constant secretarial assistance.

ALEXANDRE MORET.

PARIS, June 18, 1910.

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In the Time of the Pharaohs

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION OF THE EGYPTIAN TEMPLES

AT the beginning of the twentieth century, several of the "eternal dwellings" of Ancient Egypt had almost completely crumbled. As they had withstood for ages the ravages of time, they were considered indestructible. Their dedications read: "Temples to endure for millions of years, founded for ever and ever." These assurances of eternity, which were formerly thought to be of magic power, had survived, though the dogmas of old had been forgotten and the ancient rites abolished.

The oldest of these sanctuaries were, however, in a state of utter ruin. What remained of the splendid edifice that Ousirniri of the Vth dynasty had raised in honour of the Sun, or of the temple in pyramidal form built by a Montouhotpou of the XIth dynasty?[1] Messrs. von Bissing and Naville, who cleared them, found only bare terraces, scattered bas-reliefs, and crumbling colonnades. At Karnak, a national sanctuary where every Pharaoh, from the chieftains of the primitive clans to the Roman Cæsars, used to build a temple or a chapel, the visitor versed in such matters could still make out, quite near the pylons of Thothmes, marvellous carved blocks, half buried, which were all that remained of the effaced halls erected by the Ousirtasens and Amenôphises. Such ruins could hardly be expected to make a strong impression.

The eye prefers to rest securely on the buildings of the Ramses, or of the Bubastite kings. There, at least, the general plan of the Egyptian temple still stands out distinctly, though many walls have fallen in and the structure is complicated.

An avenue of sphinxes leads to a high gate, defended by two pylons similar to the towers of our cathedrals. In front of the gate, are placed two obelisks, as well as colossal statues in a seated or standing posture. Crossing the threshold, we enter a spacious court surrounded by a cloister of colonnades or caryatids; in the centre, is an altar where the offerings were burned. Walking up a gentle incline, we come to what is known as the "hypostyle" court, where many rows of enormous columns support at the height of sixty-three to sixty-six feet a ceiling of ponderous flagstones. At New Year's, on fête-days of the seasons, and on days set apart for divine and royal worship, the crowd of worshippers had access to this part of the building where they might view the procession of the gods or of the king. Before issuing into the court, ablaze with sunshine and flooded with light, it was pleasant to linger in the freshness and semi-obscurity of these high covered halls. But beyond this point no living being might venture to go, unless he were of divine race, either in his own right or by initiation. Only the grand priest and the king had access to the sanctuary, a central room, low and massive, with no other opening than the door. There slumbered, behind the sealed and bolted panels, in complete darkness, the statue of the god, placed in an ark or granite naos, waiting for the sacrificer who was to awaken him by the force of secret rites.

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[1] Fifth dynasty: about 3800 years B.C.; XIth dynasty: about 2500.

No other temples dating from the new kingdom are so well preserved in their main outlines; but parts of each of them are in good condition. Gournah, one of the marvels of Egyptian art, has preserved from the ravages of time only a dismantled hypostyle and a few cult-chambers. Abydos, built at the same time, has retained a hypostyle and seven shrines, in white limestone, of very fine texture, on which have been carved reliefs of delicate workmanship. In the Rameseum, unique on account of its impressive proportions and the shining splendour of its red sandstone, only half of the pylons remain, together with fragments of porticoes and a magnificent hypostyle whose ceiling is intact. At Luxor, one of the obelisks has been removed,[1] the colossal statues are shattered. Of its two courts, the first, characterised by beautiful porticoes with caryatids, is buried in rubbish, on top of which a mosque is as it were enthroned. The second court, with its graceful colonnades set up by Thothmes III, is partly destroyed. A few structures, diminutive models of temples practically complete, are also seen at Karnak; they belong to Khonsu and Ramses III. In the great temple of Amon, however, after passing the court where out of ten gigantic columns only *one* raises aloft its lotus flower, we see nothing but the huge roofless hypostyle, and, all around, crumbling pylons, overturned walls, sunken ceilings covering destroyed shrines, an indescribable chaos, dominated by

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[1] It is the obelisk standing on Place de la Concorde in Paris. The other one, also given to France by the Khedive, was never removed.

> L'élan démesuré des aiguilles de pierre.
> ("The aspiring height of the stone needles.")[1]

Less damaged by weather and better sheltered from the injuries of man are the temples of that period which were sunk in the rock: at Deir-el-Bahri the underground structure is intact, as is also the large speos of Abu Simbel, flooded to its depths by the rising sun, whose entrance is guarded by four colossi chiselled from the rock.

There are, however, in Egypt some temples that are practically intact: they are those reconstructed by the Ptolemies and Cæsars at Edfu, Philæ, and Denderah. Erected about a thousand years later than the temples above mentioned, and maintained with the greatest care down to the fourth century of our era, they have more stoutly withstood the encroachments of destruction. Compared with earlier temples, they present a more distinct and uniform plan; perhaps the

[1] J. M. de Hérédia.

harmonious proportions of Greek art influenced the last Egyptian architects. Yet it was scarcely for the best. The largest of the Ptolemaic structures no longer give that impression of heroic grandeur which is striking in the case of Karnak and of the Rameseum; their outlines are stiff and hard; their dimensions appear meagre even when they are vast; the decoration is overdone rather than sumptuous; the reliefs and inscriptions show a compromise between the realistic modelling of Greek art and the hieratic generalisation of the old national style, and as a result are seen those sad and monotonous faces that make a visit to Esneh and to Denderah painful. Putting aside these criticisms, it is but just to praise the beautiful arrangement in the temple of Edfu, the graceful floral columns of Philæ with their diversified capitals, finely wrought, and of exquisite colouring that is as yet undimmed; the hypostyle of Denderah, where at the top of each column, lost in the dimness of the massive ceiling, smiles the puzzling face of a goddess with long eyes, cow-ears, and a head-dress in the form of a sistrum. The real interest of these monuments is vested, however, in their practically perfect state of preservation. As some one has said, the priests of Horus, could they return to Edfu, would require only a few hours to make it ready for worship. There are lacking only the sacred pieces of furniture, the statues of the gods, and the offerings; all the other things are there: the texts and the pictures composing the ritual, the calendar of the festivals, the catalogue of the holy books.

In brief, hardly anything remains of the temples preceding the XVIIIth dynasty except a few ruins and substructures, valuable only to the archæologists; the monuments of the following period have come down to us partly destroyed; only the temples last constructed seem still to defy the centuries.

It is necessary to point out these distinctions, because there is a widespread impression, which has taken hold even of those who have visited Egypt, that the Pharaonic achievements in their entirety are safe from the rude buffetings of time. So old are these ruins, life has been extinct in them for so many years, that destruction itself seems to have lost all power; like mummies, the dismembered bodies of the temples seem to lie on the ground, in a state of miraculous and everlasting preservation. But this is a very false impression. Life has not departed from these desiccated stones; a slow process of destruction and transformation is still going on in them, as has been made manifest in recent times by accidents, which might have been irremediable but for the vigilance of the Egyptian Service des Antiquités.

The causes of destruction are either accidental and transitory, or fundamental and permanent. To meet these exigencies, the Service des Antiquités had in some cases to take steps to secure partial conservation, in other cases to bring about complete restoration.

Among the comparatively transient causes of destruction should be mentioned, in the first place, the utter neglect of all the temples for at least fifteen hundred years. An edict issued by Theodosius I, about the end of the fourth century, prohibited every other worship except the Christian; the Pharaonic temples, several of which were already falling to ruin, were given up to the injuries of time and of men. They had received up to that time the most careful attention and had been kept in good repair. We know indeed, from the archives preserved in the temples, that these newer shrines, built in the time of the Ptolemies, had in their primitive form existed since the Memphite or Thinite Pharaohs, *i.e.*, about 4000 years earlier. It is easy to understand that they had required continual restoration.

To take an instance, Thothmes III, of the XVIIIth dynasty, rebuilt the temple at Denderah in accordance with the ancient plan, dating from King Cheops, which had already been made use of by Pepi I of the VIth dynasty.[1] Long before the birth of the builder of the great pyramid, if one can place belief in a tradition which Chabas found recorded in a papyrus in Berlin, the temple of Denderah was standing, dating back to the reign of King Ousaphaïs of the Ist dynasty.[2] This testimony has been partially confirmed by the discovery, in one of the secret crypts of the temple, of a bas-relief representing a statue of King Pepi I worshipped as one of the founders of the shrine.[3] Bearing in mind that the present temple was reconstructed in the first century B.C., we may imagine how much effort was expended in this one locality during four or five thousand years, in order to preserve the shrine.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that throughout the history of Egypt it was a constant endeavour of the Pharaohs to maintain the temples in good condition, and that is why such munificent sums were expended in endowing and supporting the sacerdotal colleges that were entrusted with the maintenance of the sacred buildings. At times the usual income ran short; after the great invasions—that of the Hyksos, Assyrians, Persians, etc.—which left the temples plundered or utterly neglected, thorough repairing or even rebuilding was found necessary. The king had to incur the expense, whether he was a Pharaoh, a Ptolemy, or a Cæsar; as a son of the gods it devolved upon him to preserve the ancestral heritage, the home of his fathers. Here is an example, among a hundred, of the laudatory accounts which, after some restoration of the kind, were engraved on a stela put in a conspicuous place in the temple. It concerns Thothmes III and the temple of Phtah at Karnak:

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[1] Dümichen, *Bauurkunde*, Pl. XVI.

[2] Chabas, "Sur l'antiquité de Denderah" (*Zeitschrift für ægyptische Sprache*, 1865, p. 92).

[3] Mariette, *Denderah*, iii, Pl. 71–72.

> My Majesty ordered this temple of Phtah to be built at Thebes. Now, as my Majesty had found this temple—which was built of brick, with its pillars and doors of wood—toppling into ruin, my Majesty ordered the work of laying out the temple to be done over again (in order to fix the limits) and directed that the temple be built of good, solid white stone, and its enclosing walls of solid, durable brick; then, when my Majesty had the doors put in, doors made of new acacia from the land of the Levant, with hinges of copper from Asia, when the temple of Phtah stood, re-created, in the name of my Majesty . . . I decorated its shrine with electrum from every country,

> and with sacred vases made of gold and of silver, and of all kinds of precious stones, and with fine, white linen. When thereupon, my Majesty installed the god in his place, I had his temple filled with every good thing, oxen, geese, incense, wine, every provision, every annual fruit of the earth. . . .

And the usual conclusion—whatever the real importance of the restoration—is not missing: "Never had anything like this been done for the god, never, before the time of my Majesty."[1]

If the temples, after the disappearance of Pharaohs and priests, had only been left to themselves, they might have held out victoriously for centuries on account of the solidity of their material and the innocuousness of the climate; but they were not left undisturbed by men. After the pagan priesthood came the Christian monks: with a piety that was by no means free from barbarism they hunted out the false gods in their retreats, shattering the statues, defacing the reliefs, hammering out the inscriptions. At Denderah, the smoke of their camp-fires blackened the ceiling of the halls; at Luxor, they converted the ante-chamber of the sanctuary into a church; even to this day, the stucco, with which they covered up the scenes of the Egyptian ritual, dishonours the walls and conceals the reliefs of Amenôphis III. Elsewhere, they have copied, in red ink, passages from the Fathers, decrees of the councils, and entire sermons in Coptic language.

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[1] Maspero: *Comptes rendus de l' Académie des Inscriptions*, 1899.

Later, when Egypt changed master and religion, and Islam, represented successively by the Arabs and the Turks, was a dominating force, the monuments fared no better. Generations of iconoclasts devoted themselves to the destruction of the human face wherever it appeared in statue or relief, thus completing the execrable work of the Christians; it was then that the Sphinx was mutilated, notwithstanding the fact that it was admired by learned men, such as Abdellatif. Then, in the Delta especially, the temples served as quarries: lime was obtained from the blocks of carved limestone; as for the granite, it gave a ready supply for the basins of fountains, the thresholds of mosques, and the walls of palaces. To see what remains of the old monuments of Memphis and of Heliopolis, you need only wander about the streets in Cairo, and notice, as M. Daressy[1] has done, the bits of stelæ and the fragments of reliefs imbedded in the masonry of the mosques and palaces, but discernible here and there. This systematic destruction has continued

[1] *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, iv, p. 101; *cf.* ii, p. 95.

until our day: the temple of Erment, the last relic of the oldest Theban shrine, still existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century; but it was pulled down, and the material used for building purposes by sugar-refiners, who have come into the land along with European civilisation. To-day all that remains of it is formless débris.

In some cases, it was simply the contact with modern life that brought about a more speedy destruction of the temples. In many cases, they were very nearly engulfed by the private houses surrounding them, just as in the Middle Ages our cathedrals were crowded in by numerous booths and tenements. In the course of centuries, these houses, built of brick and clay, have crumbled away and have been rebuilt innumerable times; but, at each new reconstruction, no trouble was taken to rase the walls to the ground. "The rubbish was made level and the new house erected from a foundation a few feet higher than that of the former house; this is why each town is now on top of one or several artificial mounds, dominating the country around."[1] Most of the temples in Upper Egypt were in spite of their high walls thus buried alive under the rubbish of dead cities, or beneath the buildings of prosperous villages. At Denderah the piled-up rubbish rises higher than the roof of the small temple; in order to enter the hypostyle of the great temple, a trench had to be dug through the mountain of débris.[1] The ceiling of the hypostyle hall of Esneh, supported by columns seventy feet high, is now actually on a level with the ground raised by the continual elevation of the rubbish; the former level of the ground is reached by descending a very steep stairway leading as it were, to a cellar; the sanctuary, next to the hypostyle, is still buried under modern habitations. In order to clear Edfu, "to extricate it from its inhabitants, and set it free in the name of science," it required on the part of Mariette months and months of tiring interminable work; and it will be seen further on with what task M. Maspero was confronted, when he undertook the clearing of the temple of Luxor where the population of a whole village had established itself for centuries.

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[1] G. Maspero, "Premier rapport sur les fouilles exécutées en Égypte de 1881 à 1885" (*Bibliothèque Égyptologique*, t. i, p. 188).

Such a neighbourhood is extremely detrimental to the ancient edifices. Not only do the latter serve as quarries for building purposes, but the joists of the houses are made to rest on the reliefs;

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[1] Since my last visit to Denderah (1906), the façade of the temple has, after considerable labour, been set free.

the fires soil the sacred ceilings with their resinous smoke; men and animals defile the ground with refuse and filth. Gradually the heaps of ancient bricks and the newer ruins on which are piled up dung-hills and waste matter are transformed into earth containing a plentiful admixture of saltpetre and saltwort, which the natives call *sebakh;* whenever the saltpetre comes in contact with the ancient masonry, it eats away the limestone, destroys the grain of the granite, and crumbles the sandstone. Thus, even the indifferent contact of man is fatal to the abandoned temples.

Egyptology itself, at its inception, did some damage to the Egyptian monuments. The general survey of the ancient monuments, made by the scholars in the train of Bonaparte, was completed by the archæological expeditions of Champollion, Lepsius, and Rosellini, who drew up the plan of every important necropolis and pointed out the most significant monuments. After them, there was a rush on temples and tombs by amateurs and dealers in antiquities, who trained the natives, Copts and Arabs, in plundering, and gathered together those heterogeneous collections that now form the stock of our great museums of Egyptology in Paris, London, Berlin, Florence, and

Turin. Even Mariette, the founder of the Egyptian Service des Antiquités, began by pillaging Egypt, sending to Paris thousands of monuments found in the Serapeum. Yet one idea kept obtruding itself upon him: how to put an end to the shameful robbery which threatened to lay waste the ancient ground of Egypt. "Within four years," he wrote, "I have seen 700 tombs wiped out on the plain of Abusir and Sakkarah." On his return to Cairo in 1857, with the mission of exploring Upper Egypt and all its ancient sites, in order to draw up an itinerary for Prince Napoleon, Mariette succeeded in obtaining from the Khedive, Said Pasha, the following instructions: "You will see to the safety of the monuments; you will say to the *moudirs* (governors) of all my provinces that I forbid them to touch one ancient stone; you will send to prison any fellah who is caught putting his foot inside a temple." Prince Napoleon gave up his visit to Egypt, but—what was more important—Mariette stayed, and he was appointed, on June 1, 1858, Director of the archæological survey in Egypt. In the beginning, this Service des Antiquités had no fixed income, nor any regular staff; Mariette had the right to enlist the services of the peasants in digging and in excavating and he demanded credit when the circumstances required. During the first ten years he could not do much in the way of preserving the old monuments.

To show the necessity of a supervising administration, Mariette wanted to organise a museum in Cairo; he therefore pillaged, in a methodical manner, the sites of Gizeh, Sakkarah, Abydos, Tanis, and Saïs, in order "to get relics, more and more relics." The museum once organised and filled with remarkable works of art, Mariette could devote himself to more scholarly work. Urged by the scholars of Europe to excavate in a more systematic manner and to publish detailed information regarding the monuments already brought to light, Mariette undertook excavations in several districts, in Edfu, Denderah, Abydos, no longer with the idea of despoiling the temples for the benefit of the museum, but of restoring each site to its ancient condition, for the benefit of science. Death overtook him, in 1881, when he had hardly begun the second part of his task, and before he was able to exercise his powers to the full. At least he had rendered modern Egypt an immense service by interesting her in her marvellous old treasures.[1] "Had it not been for him, Egypt would have continued for a long time destroying her monuments and selling broken pieces of them abroad, without keeping anything for herself: he prevailed upon her to keep them."

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[1] G. Maspero, *Biographie de Mariette* (in vol. viii of *Bibliothèque Égyptologique*).

From 1881 to 1886, M. Maspero, who succeeded Mariette, gave to the direction of the Service des Antiquités a real scientific aim, and his success was facilitated by the thorough reorganisation of the state, which was the result of the English occupation of Egypt. M. Maspero had the courage to declare that the work of excavation ought to be subordinated to more important tasks confronting the Service: its main object should be to free the base of the monuments, to maintain them in good condition, and to make them known; the time had come when it was necessary to substitute for superficial surveying thorough exploration and the publication in detail of information about the work accomplished. From that day on there has been an organised attempt to preserve the Egyptian antiquities.

The clearing of the temples was already well on the way at such places at Edfu, Denderah, and Abydos; M. Maspero therefore gave his undivided attention to one of the best preserved places, Luxor. His task was not an easy one: the temple which the scholars of Bonaparte's expedition and later Champollion and Lepsius had seen practically free from encroaching houses, "had been covered with habitations during the last thirty years. Towards the north, the two towers, on each side of the entrance gate, the first court, and the porticoes surrounding it, were more than half concealed under a mass of mud and straw houses, that leaned against the columns, clung to the walls, and crushed the architraves with the weight of their bricks. The two minarets of the mosque of Abu'l Haggâg rose as best they could above this irregular dirty mass. Under the great colonnade running from the northern court to the sanctuary in the south, there were two houses, that of the cadi of Esneh and that of a consul. The western part of the front, facing the river, was hidden by various buildings, a police station, a prison, a post-office, government-magazines, and a French mission house.[1] Behind the huts there was a waste plain, disfigured by groups of three or four hovels, and strewn with rubbish; commons for sheep and goats occupied the place between the capitals of the columns, pigeon-houses appeared triumphantly on the remains of the terrace of the temple. . ."[1]

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[1] This house accommodated the expedition sent to Egypt by the French Government, 1836, in order to remove the obelisk, seen standing to-day on the *Place de la Concorde.*

Tiresome formalities had to be entered into and the payment of large sums for damages was necessarily entailed in turning out the families living in the monument;[2] but M. Maspero overcame all difficulties and knew how to interest the European press in his undertaking: a subscription raised by the *Journal des Débats* and by the *Times* yielded 19,000 francs. The work, once begun, was made easy by the co-operation of the natives, eager to carry away the *sebakh* with which they make an excellent manure; after several interruptions the temple was finally cleared, about the year 1893. The mosque of Abu'l Haggâg, however, could not be touched, the law forbidding it; so it was left there, and it still encumbers the north-east part of the first court.

M. Maspero had been recalled to France in 1887 before the consummation of the work; but though his successors, Messrs. Grébaut (1887–1892), de Morgan (1892–1897), and Loret (1897–1899) devoted their energy to the clearing of other places, it became an established principle to work exhaustively over one particular site. M. Daressy, who had already done much for the clearing of Luxor, spent several seasons in stripping off the Coptic houses from the splendid buildings of Medinet Habu: since 1897, every part of the temple is approachable.[1]

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[1] G. Maspero, *Premier rapport sur les fouilles exécutées en Egypte de 1881 à 1885.*

[2] Similar negotiations are carried on now, in order to turn out the natives who live in the court and the sanctuary of the temple of Esneh.

The clearing of Luxor and Medinet Habu could not be carried out unless a great deal of repairing was done; here and there it was necessary to reconstruct a crumbling wall, to put together the scattered pieces of some bas-relief, to strengthen a few columns, and, in order that they might not mar the effect, to hide behind architraves or lintels the iron bars introduced, according to M. Legrain's method, to support the stones that were ready to fall. These were the kind of tasks that confronted the Service des Antiquités, tasks which nevertheless, in the case of the majority of temples in Upper and Lower Egypt, were accomplished with forethought and care.

Recently it has been necessary to apply preventive measures to the whole group of temples at Philæ; for, since 1902, they have been submerged during six months of the year by the waters dammed at Assouan. Before allowing the old sandstone, dried up for so many centuries, to bear the test of such an inundation, M. Barsanti, a most experienced superintendent in the Service des Antiquités, was entrusted by M. Maspero with the task of thoroughly cleaning the temples, of ridding them of every particle of saltpetre, of filling up all crevices, and of joining by invisible ligatures all loose stones. After many other precautions had been taken, the island of Philæ was inundated; and the water forcing its way to the interior of the edifice, whence it had been banished since prehistoric times, rushed into the court, flooded the pavement of the hypostyle and the sanctuary, and rose to the height of the capitals on the propylæa of the great temple. The result of so ruthless a treatment was awaited with anxiety: as yet nothing has happened, no block has slipped, and the cement jointures, with which M. Barsanti had protected the walls, are still intact. It is hoped that the temple will be able to survive these inundations a long time, and optimists even declare that this annual cleansing is salutary.

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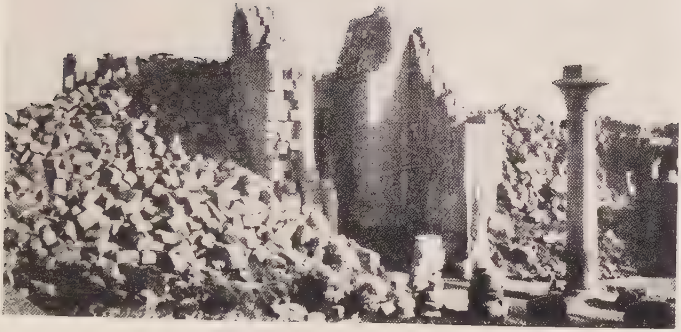
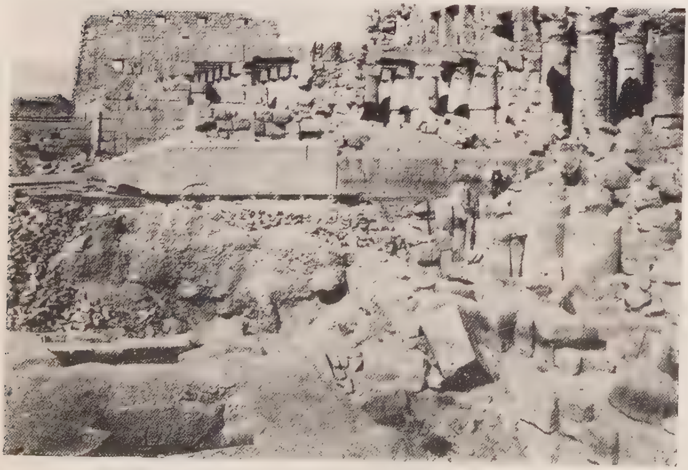
[1] M. Daressy has published excellent *Notes* on the temples of Luxor and Medinet Habu in the Reports of the Service des Antiquités.

Several other temples, from Philæ down to Ouadi Halfa, are inundated by the Nile. M. Maspero estimates that 600,000 francs will have

Karnak.



I. The Shattered Pylons.



II. Western Face of the Hypostyle Hall in 1904.

Plate II.

to be expended in order to put them temporarily in condition to withstand this test. In truth, it is not known but that the periodic submersion to which they are subjected may prove fatal to them in the long run; but for the time being, Philæ is safe from all immediate danger.[1]

The experience at Philæ has demonstrated the efficacy of the preventive measures adopted by the Service des Antiquités; as the Department kept extending its activity to embrace new areas, it had to take precautions to protect each new site, in order that its triumphs might be enduring. The very primitive organisation started by Mariette, was bound to develop into a highly efficient public service, into a kind of "Ancient Egypt Office." The heart and soul of this organism are still in the Museum of Cairo (formerly at Boulak, later at Gizeh); thither are transported the rare or fragile pieces, which it would be very risky to leave on the site where they were found. For instance, when recently M. Naville found intact a chapel of the goddess Hâthor at Deir-el-Bahri, an unguarded place in the mountains, it did not seem advisable to leave the divine cow in the shrine where she was venerated. The idol was accordingly put in a case and the shrine taken apart; both were then sent to Cairo, the shrine being put together again at the Museum and the cow replaced in it.[1]

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[1] G. Maspero, *Rapport pour 1905*. Cf. *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, t. iv, v, vii,

Yet, the practice of leaving the monuments in place, whenever this is possible, seems to be prevailing now. M. Legrain did not despoil the temple of Phtah of its statues, and the tomb of Amenôphis II was opened to the public, still adorned with the funeral furnishings which M. Loret discovered there. This policy will doubtless be pursued in the future: it is impracticable to heap up at Cairo all the countless statues and interesting documents which Egypt still holds concealed; these monuments will be far more impressive if left in their place, but it will be necessary to take rigorous precautionary measures to guarantee their safety, and means of communication will have to be opened up to make all of the sites easy of access.

The Service has, therefore, purposely begun to decentralise: superintendents have been appointed to take charge of the three great regions: the Saïd, the Fayûm, and the Delta.[2] M. Legrain and M. Quibell have the supervision of two independent districts: Karnak and Sakkarah.[1] Under their direction, hundreds of guardians (*ghaffirs*), selected in preference to other natives on account of their intelligence, watch the tourists and dealers in antiquities, and every evening lock up the tombs and temples. It may be imagined how large are the expenditures necessitated by the continual increase in the number of employees,[2] and how great the disbursements for enclosing and for restoring the monuments, an ever growing item. Besides its regular budget, the Service often had to have recourse to the treasury, and since 1887 it has levied a tax of thirty francs[3] a person on the tourists visiting the monuments; besides, independent excavations by individuals or learned societies cannot be undertaken except upon application to the Service and upon agreement to share with it the treasures discovered. In a word, all Egypt is to-day a museum carefully guarded. Although the theft of antiquities and clandestine excavations are still frequent occurrences, the systematic pillage, which

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[1] *Cf.* Maspero, *Causeries d'Égypte*, p. 319.

[2] Under the direction of Messrs. Weigall, Lefébure and Edgar.

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[1] The work-yard at Karnak has an annual allowance of 50,000 francs, that of Sakkarah, 25,000, for the work of excavation and of restoration.

[2] The Service employed in 1905, 250 permanent and 200 temporary *ghaffirs*.

[3] The tax produced nearly 150,000 francs in 1905.

Mariette so deplored, is no longer possible. Local justice has taught robbers that every crime committed against Ancient Egypt is paid for, in money, in blows of the stick, or in years of imprisonment, the punishment for these deplorable occurrences being just as severe as that meted out for offences against modern society.

The work of preservation, however, will not be complete until generations of scholars have through publications of a sound scientific character turned to account the methodical clearing and repairing of the monuments, a difficult task for which we are indebted to the Service. It is a great handicap that Egyptologists have at their disposal as yet only a very incomplete collection of texts and plates from which dearth of material result mistakes, erroneous ideas, and ignorance. Owing to the efforts of the Service several temples are now accessible in all their parts, but competent scholars should be commissioned to interpret them, so that the information about the past which they convey may be understood. These interpreters will have to be patient and scrupulous copyists, will have to have a knowledge as vast as possible, and will have to be in possession of a tested method,—a mental equipment possessed by but few and not more characteristic of Egyptologists than of the representatives of other sciences. The Archæological Institute, maintained by France in Cairo,[1] has made praiseworthy efforts—sometimes successfully—towards publishing information about the monuments cleared by the Service, but its resources are by no means sufficient for the task. The English society, Egypt Exploration Fund, has done much in that direction; it entrusted the clearing of the temple of Deir-el-Bahri and the publication of information about it to M. Naville, who does it in a masterly way.[2] For the drawing up of its general catalogue, the Museum of Cairo requested the assistance of all nationalities;[3] it is desirable now that in like manner the "Greater Museum" that Egypt has become should have its own descriptive catalogue,[4] to which in order that the great effort of the Service may bear fruit rapidly, all scholars should contribute.

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[1] Under the direction successively of Messrs. Maspero, Lefébure, Bouriant, and Chassinat.

[2] We are glad to point out here the work done by the Americans in Egypt; excavations of Dr. Reisner on the site of Gizeh, on behalf of the University of California; private excavations by Theodore M. Davis, in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes; exploration of the Egyptian Sudan by J. H. Breasted, for the University of Chicago; archæological missions of M. Lythgoe for the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

[3] Under the direction of M. Maspero, assisted throughout by M. Pierre Lacau.

[4] This Catalogue of the monuments of all Egypt was begun by M. de Morgan, then abandoned for several years and taken up again by M. Maspero; it now comprises the monuments

The preservation of monuments is only part—and the least difficult at that—of the task assumed to-day by the Service des Antiquités. The care lavished upon the temples by Mariette and Maspero has not always saved the tottering monuments which have been going to ruin for two thousand years. In consequence of sudden catastrophes other methods of treatment had to be invented; and recently a tremendous problem had to be solved: how to restore certain edifices entirely.

At Karnak an accident happened to a part of the temple that seemed particularly capable of surviving indefinitely, thus thwarting the hope that had been entertained regarding it. The large hypostyle hall, the 134 columns of which, ranging in height from 66 feet along the centre to 40 along the sides, were erected by Seti I, and Ramses II, had for a long time been without a ceiling, a condition of things which endangered its stability. The columns, being no longer wedged in by the

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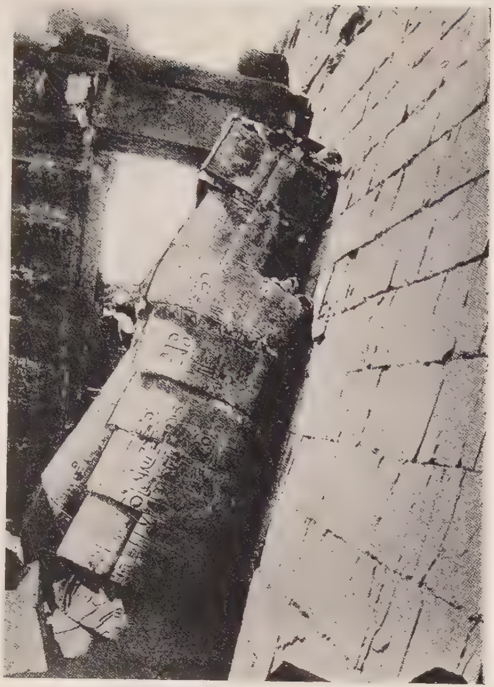
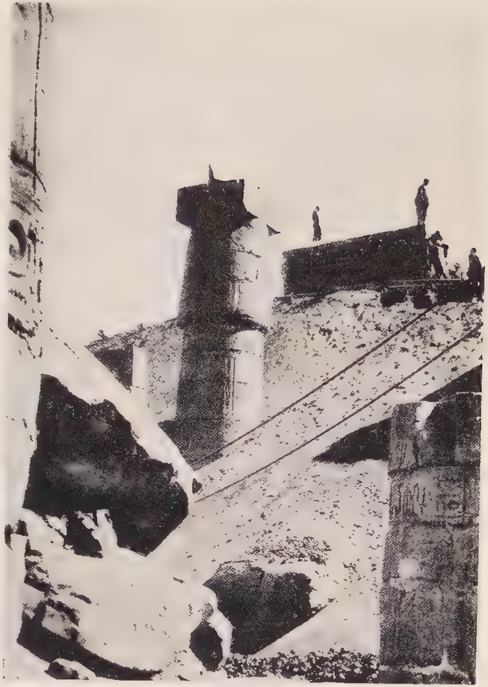
situated between Assouan and Kôm-Ombo, inclusively. This publication is very unsatisfactory, but the Service des Antiquités is preparing a series of monographs dealing with the principal monuments and reproducing them *in extenso*. Many years will be necessary to carry out this great enterprise.

Karnak.



Cliché of the Service des Antiquités.

I. After the Earthquake of 1899.



II. The Taking Down of a Column.

Plate III.

weight of the enormous stones, nor held rigidly in place, had begun to loosen; some had crumbled, others gave way gradually under the ponderous architraves. One of these roused the admiration of visitors; it was the famous leaning column,[1] which cut diagonally the rectangular opening formed by the smaller columns of the next row (Plate I). Imagine a pillar, about 40 feet high and 7 in diameter, inclined obliquely in space, and carrying with it an architrave, 10 feet thick, weighing about 40 tons. The whole kept its balance by the aid of the disjointed base of the column and the exterior angle of the architrave: the latter had lodged against a neighbouring column and found support on a surface a few inches in extent; all around was empty space; light could be seen even between the architrave and the capital, which it touched at only two points. How could the supporting column bear the weight of this enormous mass, when it struck it ponderously with its weight of nearly 200 tons; why did not these loose stones slip off, and how had they maintained their adhesiveness? Such miracles of balance and resistance helped establish a strong confidence in the solidity of these Karnak ruins (Plate II, 2).

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[1] It was demolished in the course of the restoration.

Now, in 1899, eleven columns of the hypostyle hall crumbled suddenly; it was only chance that the rest of the columns did not, like a house of cards, also collapse.

It was the third of October, about nine o'clock in the morning; a guard, making his circuit of the surrounding walls, heard a loud noise resembling thunder. Immediately he ran towards the temple, arriving in the hypostyle hall just in time to see two columns thrust against the pylon of Ramses. Another guard was standing, terrified, at the foot of the obelisk of Thothmes and would not approach until the noise had ceased.

Thus, no one witnessed the beginning of the accident. Monsieur Legrain, from whom I quote these words, discovered that the original cause was the accidental falling of one column; the latter overturned the column in front of it, dragging down the architraves, which joined both of them to the adjacent columns in the row. The architraves and the detached segments behaved like projectiles: seven columns of the same row fell, each pushing the other down; but in the parallel row, only three columns tumbled as a result of the imparted shock, the progress of destruction being arrested by the unexpected resistance of the fourth column. All this happened in a few seconds, and there lay upon the ground a chaotic mass of enormous segments, presenting the most picturesque but distressing aspect. Several neighbouring columns were struck on the surface by colossal blocks, weighing from 10 to 15 tons, which made deep incisions; at the end of the file, the two last columns, with all their segments disjoined but still superposed, slanted on the sloping surface of the pylon, which fraternally upheld them in their fall (Pl. II, 1, and III, 1).

As a result of this accident at Karnak, Egyptologists were confronted with the perplexing question: should an ancient monument that falls in ruins be reconstructed? An immediate decision was necessary; either the hypostyle hall must be abandoned to its fate, or an inquiry made about the causes of destruction and a remedy applied without delay.

The Director of the Service, M. Maspero, had to assume the responsibility of so grave a decision. Owing to his thorough acquaintance with the monuments of Egypt, formed in the course of his previous management of the Service, owing also to his ability to meet all scientific or material difficulties with knowledge supplemented by a vast experience, the question was soon answered: an edifice should not be allowed to tumble, if the power of resistance inherent in it has not yet exhausted itself, and this may be the case even though pieces of it have become disjoined as a result of the changing conditions affecting it in the course of centuries. A fortnight after the catastrophe in Karnak, a delegation of specialists arrived there, formed an opinion on the spot, and drew up on October 28th a statement of the work to be done, and an estimate of the probable expenses. On December 11th, M. Legrain opened his work-yard, and, supplied with instructions by M. Maspero, undertook one of the most important and perilous works ever conceived or executed by an archæologist.

The weak spot in the gigantic building raised by the Pharaohs is, as a rule, their foundations. Unless they were building on the rocky ground in the desert, the architects were confronted by the difficulty that wherever they dug deep, in the plain, they would find wet and soft soil, on a level with the infiltrations of the Nile; in consequence they had to be satisfied with removing the earth on the surface and digging foundations in virgin soil. In the case of the hypostyle hall in Karnak, the excavation was made about seven feet deep; there were raised, on a bed of alluvium mixed with sand, little piles of masonry, composed of large, uneven, rough stones, heaped up in irregular layers, a large part of which were taken from an edifice, built by the heretic king, Amenôphis IV, but piously demolished by his orthodox successors. Sometimes, in place of the rough stones, there is a filling of earth, bits of stones, and potsherds. Notice that on these piles "which remind us of lacustrine heaps rather than of real foundations" were placed columns weighing in their totality about 226 tons. Often these piles are smaller in diameter than the base of the columns, a condition essentially unfavourable to the stability of the structure. Besides, the only connecting medium between the piles supporting the columns is an embankment of pebbles and earth, covered over with a thin layer of flagstones. This shortcoming was certainly owing to ignorance, negligence, or fraud on the part of the architects of the hypostyle hall.

These foundations, already insecure, were threatened by two causes of destruction which the Egyptians could not foresee, namely, *sebakh* and the inundation of the Nile. The hypostyle hall was not originally intended for habitation and there was no reason for supposing that saltpetre would be formed. But from the time of the Christian era habitations became numerous, and the enormous amount of *sebakh* and rubbish of all kinds that had to be removed in order to bring to light a part of the ancient floor, shows how numerous the houses must have been; rubbish rose, indeed, to a height of over seven feet in the hypostyle hall; there remains still in the south side a mound, about 25 feet high. The destructive quality of the earth containing saltpetre has been increased a hundred-fold by the slow rising, in the course of centuries, of the bed of the Nile. If the calculations made by Grand-Pasha and Ventre-Pasha are accurate, the average rising of the bed of the Nile, owing to the deposit of alluvium, may be estimated at 3.744 inches in a century. Now the hypostyle hall was built only 12.84 inches above the level of the inundations; scarcely two hundred years after its construction, the foundations were already reached by the infiltrations; thirteen hundred years later, about the year 600 of our era, the water, at the time of the flood, rose above the level of the hall and came in contact with the earth, containing saltpetre in such abundance.[1]

To conclude: for thirteen hundred years, the saltpetre, derived from *sebakh*, and dissolved by these waters, has broken up the grain of the porous sandstone and has disjointed the blocks, up to a height varying now, at the time of the annual flood, from six to ten feet above the ground.

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[1] Reports of Maspero, Legrain, Ventre-Pasha, Grand-Pasha, and the committee in Karnak after the accident of Oct. 3, 1899 (*Annales du Service des Antiquités*, t. i and following).

The Service des Antiquités has no means of defence against the rising level of the Nile and the subsequent overflow into the temples; all other causes of destruction it is within man's power to combat and here is the plan of defence that was worked out to save Karnak and eventually the other temples that are threatened with destruction: in the first place, the removal of the *sebakh;* in the second place, the taking down, layer by layer, of broken, loosened, or suspected columns; in the third place, the entire reconstruction of the foundations, after which the removed columns are to be replaced; in the fourth place, moderate irrigation at the time of an inundation, to cleanse the ground of the saltpetre brought in with the infiltrations of water charged with it.

This process, easy at it appears, was fraught with enormous difficulties in the case of Karnak; it had to be applied first to the north side of the hypostyle, where, since the crumbling of the eleven columns, the ground was strewn with segments, capitals, pieces of abacuses, and architraves, some blocks of which weighed from 5 to 40 tons. This work requiring great physical strength had to be done, though those engaged in it were imperilled, owing to the fact that the columns still standing might, at any moment, fall, several of them being in an uncertain state of equilibrium, and some unstable to an alarming degree. The clear and precise instructions of M. Maspero had to be carried out by a clever man, who knew all the strong and the weak points of Karnak, and could, in case of emergency, take an intelligent and courageous initiative. These qualities were possessed, in an eminent degree, by M. Georges Legrain, who had held the office of superintendent in Karnak since 1895; thanks to him, the problem of the reconstruction of Karnak is solved to-day, at least in its most difficult points.

The work was begun in December, 1899. At the end of the first season, in 1900, the five columns shaken by the impact of the others were taken down, segment by segment; the second season, in 1901, was given up to the clearing of the eleven columns that had tumbled, and to the removal of the *sebakh*. Now that the ground was clear, it was possible to reach the foundations, the stones of which were found sound and unaffected by saltpetre; thus, the principal cause of the crumbling had been a lack of masonry in the foundations, rather than the damage done to the stones by the water. Relying on these facts, M. Maspero could apply, in 1902, a proper method of reconstruction: along the row of fallen columns, a trench was to be dug, larger than the base of the columns and as deep (about 6 feet) as the ancient foundations; this trench was to be filled up with a floor of strong concrete, on which the columns were to be re-erected; each column of a particular row was to be joined to the opposite column in the adjacent row by a link of concrete, so that the new foundations might be connected with the old. The plan was executed without delay. On the twelfth of April, 1902, Lord Cromer laid the first stone of the new foundations, and, in 1903, the eleven crumbled columns were re-erected to a height of 18 feet. The stones above ground, which the *sebakh* had decomposed, or which the fall had partly shattered, were put in place again after having been patched up in the following manner: a rough coat of cement, or even a block of sandstone covered the scars, stopped up the holes, leaving the ancient parts, decorated with reliefs or inscriptions, to project half an inch from the modern facing. "Thus a proper architectural form was obtained which made it possible to readily distinguish the ancient parts from the modern additions."

The new foundations were subjected, in the summer of 1903, to the test of inundation; they came out of it uninjured, and M. Legrain was able, therefore, in 1904 to put in place the upper part of the shaft of each column, the capital and the abacus. At that time a serious difficulty presented itself. The re-erected columns had to be kept as firm at the top as the new foundations maintained them at their base. But the stones composing the ceiling had been missing for centuries; the architraves that still survived had been broken in their fall, or were of no use. How were they to be replaced? At first, it was thought that a network of iron links and rings should be placed round the necks of the columns, under the capitals. M. Maspero succeeded in having this disgraceful scheme rejected. Instead of the rings, iron beams were introduced so as to extend from capital to capital, and were concealed by a coat of cement and concrete, which was shaped like and had the same dimensions as the ancient architraves. "This consolidation is to be extended to all the columns of the hall, and it seems fitting that the flat roof, which formerly covered the entire hall, be restored." The erection of the capitals and the architraves occupied the winters of 1905 and 1906. At the present writing, the damage caused by the catastrophe of 1899 has been repaired; it only remains to secure the other parts of the hypostyle hall against a similar accident. Doubtless it is a stupendous task, but its consummation has become a question only of patience and of money, for the method and scheme of work, having been tested and the results found convincing, are now established.

Yet a no less interesting result of the enterprise was this: the method adopted was not effective in all respects until M. Legrain had discovered the processes of construction of the Egyptian architects, in order to apply them anew. The removal of the segments of the fallen columns was a piece of work that required delicate handling, but in other respects was commonplace enough. When it was necessary, however, to take down, piece by piece, the columns still standing, and to remove from a height of 60 feet masses weighing 50 tons in order to let them down to the ground, architects and archæologists were perplexed. Should a scaffolding be put up, forming as it were a second hypostyle hall of wood, the ceiling of which would be supplied with tackles strong enough to raise and lower the mast-like columns? Such a thing was considered impossible, on account of the expense, the lack of material, the inadequacy of the force of workmen, and the necessity of doing the work quickly. M. Legrain, who studied

Karnak, so to speak, stone by stone, found out how the ancient Egyptians had solved the same problem, one concerned not with the demolition of the temple, but with the building of it; not with the removal of the architraves, but with the raising of them.

When you enter the great court of Karnak, at the north-west corner, you notice at once heaps of earth supported by a curbing of brick, that rise along the sides of the pylon and bury the columns of the portico, up to the neck (Plate IV, 2). Columns and pylons have remained unfinished and these mounds are as a matter of fact the scaffoldings used for building.[1] The method of the Egyptian builders, then, was to keep raising the ground as the work of construction advanced, thus making it easy to place each successive layer of material. Their platforms of earth were raised progressively with the walls or columns so that when the ceiling was being made over the hypostyle, the hall was entirely filled with earth, and the workmen could put the architraves and stones of the roof in place as easily as if they stood on natural ground.

It remains to be explained how the heavy stones were brought up to these terraces which were

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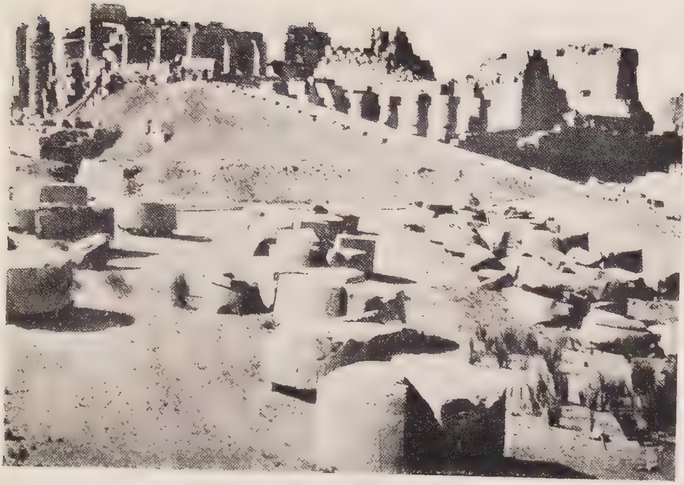
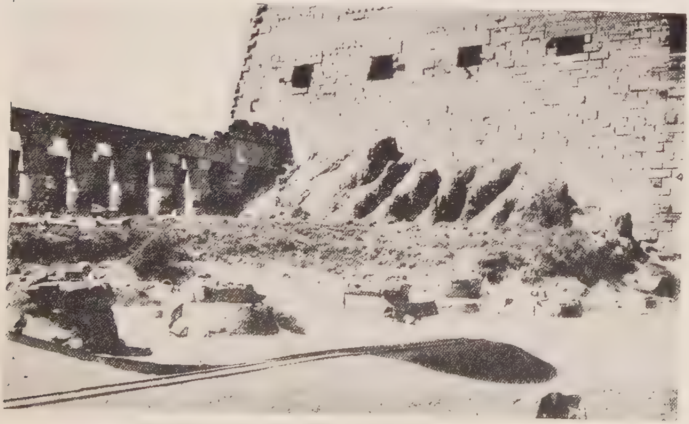
[1] *Cf.* Choisy, *L'Art de bâtir chez les Égyptiens*, Paris, 1904.

Karnak.



I. Inclined Plane Used in Taking Down the Columns.



II. Scaffolding Used in Ancient Times in Constructing.

Plate IV.

continually rising. We see from what remains in place at Karnak, that the Egyptians employed two methods. When there was room enough for the platforms of earth to be enlarged, they arranged an incline, sloping gradually, on which the blocks, placed on a truck, were drawn up by the strong arms of a hundred workmen. A bas-relief, in a tomb of the XIIth dynasty, at Bersheh, shows us a procedure of this kind: the feat to be accomplished in this instance is to haul up a colossal monolithic statue, about 18 feet high. The statue, placed on a wooden truck, is drawn by four lines of 43 men; an overseer regulates their efforts by clapping his hands rhythmically, and a boy pours water upon the hardened earth to lessen the friction and to prevent the pieces of wood from becoming heated.[1] But often the space on the platform was not sufficient to accommodate so many workmen or to admit of a gradual incline. In this case, steps or stairways made of brick were put up along the side of the structure, on which wooden elevators (the management of which has been explained by M. Legrain) were made to slide. For laying the corner-stone, the Egyptians made use, as we do, of a diminutive implement, of precious material, but in shape exactly

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[1] See the vignette of Maspero, *Histoire*, i, p. 335.

like the actual tool. The hammers or trowels of gold and silver used for such purposes we keep in museums, but the Egyptians deposited them in the foundations, where they are still occasionally found. Among these implements has come to light "an object made of wood with a rounded base, consisting of two bows in segments of a circle," joined by cross-bars. One may form a conception of it by comparing it with one of those rocking blotters that appear on our writing tables. Now, this object could not represent the curve of an arch: "some specimens bear inscriptions that would be upside down if these objects were supposed to be miniature arches." M. Legrain and, after him, M. Choisy, have demonstrated that this apparatus could have been used only as a truck, or as a hoisting-machine, swung and operated by a lever; by successive swings the "elevator," loaded with rough stones, mounted the brick stairway found at Karnak. According to Herodotus,[1] the Egyptians of the fifth century used to say that the pyramids had been built by means of light machines, moving along the steps formed by superposed courses of stone. It seems likely that these "light machines" are the swinging elevators just described.

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[1] I, ii, 125. *Cf.* Diodorus, i, 63.

Along the platform, which rose gradually to the ceiling of the hypostyle hall, there was a series of steps; the larger blocks were hoisted by means of levers, and the medium-sized stones by the aid of the swinging elevator. This explains why no trace is found at Karnak of any wooden scaffolding: the Egyptian monuments were erected by means of embankments, cleared away after the completion of the work, and by the aid of small movable machines which have left no trace.

M. Legrain, who had to undertake immediately the work of repairing, had no engines at his disposal, and both time and money were lacking to import them from Europe. Following then the example of the Egyptians, he raised mounds maintained by a curbing of brick and on this elevated ground he placed pulleys and tackles. When, under the most careful supervision, the hydraulic screw-jacks had loosened the split architraves, the latter were heaved by tackles and placed on the trucks; it was then comparatively easy to let them down to the ground, by sliding them along the incline. The removal of an architrave weighing 30 tons, a feat which I witnessed in January, 1904, took scarcely more than one morning. After the columns had been taken down, the mounds had to be cleared away, so that the foundations might be dug; after which the mounds had to be heaped up again to enable the workmen to raise the columns. The capitals were put in their former place by employing the same method used for taking them down. The ancient process, supplemented by modern equipment, made it possible to carry on the work expeditiously, and, above all, economically and securely (Plates III, 2, and IV, 1).

The above description should not convey the idea that the Service des Antiquités does not make use of the resources of modern science and engineering. The methods vary according to the condition of the buildings and the inclination of the archæologists. At Edfu, for instance, for a task of a rather different nature, M. Barsanti rejected the ancient method. The enclosure wall of the temple, on the west side, occasioned the keenest anxiety. The foundations of this gigantic wall of sandstone, about 60 feet high, were unstable; the base was sinking into the ground, and the entire middle part, forced forward, bulged out rather dangerously above the passage. M. Barsanti accepted the ungrateful task of tearing down the entire wall and laying it flat—each block being carefully numbered and marked as to its place — on the waste land around. It was a strange sight: there, spread out on the ground, were mythologic scenes of wars fought by Horus against Set, recorded on thousands of carefully arranged stones, that were priceless because of the stories inscribed upon them. The foundations once relaid, M. Barsanti raised the whole of it anew, stone by stone, and such was his care that not a fragment was lost! This wall looks to-day as though it had on no occasion been touched, since the time of the Ptolemies. But this was only a beginning. The portico had to be rebuilt in the west side of the court. M. Barsanti, rejecting the Pharaonic methods, erected an imposing scaffolding in order to support the stones of the ceiling, and the architraves, and also to encircle the columns.[1]

> It is never without a secret misgiving [wrote M. Maspero, in his *Rapport of 1905*] that I determine to begin so vast a work, in which the least negligence of the directors, or foremen of the work-yard, is likely to cause disasters. Here, however, the urgency was especially great, because a collapse of the structure, similar to that which had so badly damaged the hypostyle hall at Karnak, seemed alarmingly imminent. The long experience of M. Barsanti, his presence of mind, the perfect training of his workmen and the absolute confidence they have in him make

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[1] See the report of M. Barsanti in *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, t. vii.

me firmly believe that he will acquit himself of this task successfully.

As a matter of fact I saw this very arduous work well on the way, in April, 1906, and not the least accident had yet happened. A few hours spent in Edfu are sufficient for realising what self-sacrifice and perseverance an archæologist must have, in order to fulfil so difficult and perilous a task, in absolute solitude, without any other encouragement than the occasional visits of tourists.

After the completion of these important works, thankless tasks in connection with other sites will engage the attention of M. Barsanti and the other Inspectors. It is the intention to save the beautiful sanctuary of Gournah, the foundations of which are so unstable. As for the great pylons of Karnak and of the Rameseum, the facings of which are cracked, thus allowing the filling to come out—like a gigantic pie the crust of which bursts into pieces—they will soon have their ancient mounds remade by workmen, in order that the fallen stones may be put in place again. What surprises, in the form of texts and bas-reliefs, will their immense walls, when once rebuilt, hold in store for us?

The works undertaken at Luxor, Karnak, Edfu, and in many other places, give a sufficient indication of the main purpose of the Service des Antiquités at the present time: "to devote every resource to bring about the restoration and the methodical clearing of the temples and the cemeteries." The Service leaves to wealthy individuals and scientific societies the task of adding to the number of Egyptian relics by making fresh excavations, though it excludes such persons and societies from a few sites where excavation is inseparable from clearing, as at Karnak and Sakkarah; it intends to confine its energy to the preservation of antiquities—so much neglected up to the present time. A scholar like M. Maspero, who, it is conceded by every one, occupies the first place in Egyptology, may devote his time to a task to all appearances thankless; but a work requiring patience and method always brings a recompense, often of unexpected significance. At Karnak, for instance, the mere necessity of removing the earth, to construct an incline, resulted in the discovery, as M. Legrain's digging progressed, of more new monuments than had been discovered since the heroic times when Mariette brought to light the Serapeum. Temples rose in their completeness from the earth or the rubbish: the temple of Ramses III, the temple of the Theban Phtah, the temple of Osiris, lord of eternity; splendid pillars erected by Ousirtasen III and representing what remains of the Thebes, of the XIIth dynasty, until then unknown; a complete structure built by Amenôphis I, subsequently demolished for some unknown reason, by Thothmes III, which was found in the earth, but so well preserved that it will be possible to re-erect it in its ancient condition; finally, at the bottom of a pond, filled with stagnant water from the infiltrations of the Nile, there was discovered the entrance to a miraculous hiding-place, whence 800 statues (of all sizes and periods, some of beautiful workmanship, most of them covered with inscriptions of great historic value) and more than 15,000 pieces in bronze were brought forth in the space of two years:[1] 1903–1905.

The excavation has not been completed, and the site still yields its treasures. At Sakkarah, the clearing of the desert sand enabled M. Quibell to come upon pyramids built by the kings of the Heracleopolitan dynasties, unknown to us until then; farther north M. Barsanti has been working for years to uncover a superb monument, which has not yet disclosed its secret, but which seems more ancient than any other monument discovered up to the present time. Such finds are, indeed, a compensation for so many days spent in arduous work, fraught with responsibility. They explain the joy and patience with which workmen and engineers, masons' servers and Egyptologists are working away, in order to disinter a prehistoric Sakkarah, or a new Thebes, coming out of its ruins to eclipse rival cities, as in the time of the glory of the god Amon.

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[1] See, for further information about this discovery, Maspero's *Revue de l'Art ancien et moderne*, 1906. M. Legrain has begun the publication of an account of these statues in the *Catalogue of the Cairo Museum;* the first volume was issued in 1906.

The work undertaken by M. Maspero and his active assistants has, moreover, a scientific importance that extends far beyond the valley of the Nile. The archæologists of all countries may profit by the experiments made in Egypt, though the learned men who are conducting them work in silence, without publicity, and are hardly known, until their task is achieved. No problem has been more discussed than that of restoring ancient monuments. There are as many solutions as cases. Account must be taken of the state of preservation of the monuments, of their power of resistance, and an important question to decide is also whether their value is of an essentially artistic nature, or whether they are precious only to the historian and to the archæologist.

From a practical point of view, there is no doubt that the abandonment of half-ruined edifices is fatal to the preservation of their fragments. Whenever it is possible to raise a wall or a colonnade, by using a sufficient number of ancient stones, a restoration should be undertaken. In that connection, M. Maspero found parallel cases that engaged the attention of archæologists in other countries. Delegated in 1905 by the Khedive to the Archæological Congress in Athens, he used his time to good advantage in making a brief investigation of the methods employed in Greece in clearing monuments and in keeping them in repair.

> I went to Delphi [he wrote], where M. Homolle showed me the methods employed by the French mission, then to Olympia, the site of German excavations. The aspect of these two sites convinced me that we were right in rebuilding the remains and reconstructing the edifices whenever we could do so without using anything but the old material. Fragments of architectural or sculptural work soon go to ruin if left where they are found, exposed to the weather, whereas similar fragments restored to their former place have proved firm and durable. At Olympia, a certain temple, or part of a temple, the existence of which would have been considerably

prolonged had the edifice been rebuilt at the time of discovery, is now certain to go to waste in a short time because it was left in contact with the ground too long. On the other hand, the Treasury of the Athenians, and of the portions of the other buildings which M. Homolle reconstructed at Delphi, will survive for many centuries against the action of the weather. This example was an encouragement to me to persevere in the task undertaken, and to re-erect or to complete the construction of those monuments, a sufficient quantity of the old building material of which is available, and the proper place of the constituent parts of which can with certainty be determined.[1]

Nevertheless, it must be confessed, something is sacrificed when a temple is restored: the melancholy of the abandoned ruins, the dream that called forth the image of the dead cities. In our passion for knowledge, are we not laying impious hands upon these lifeless temples? Is it a true work of civilisation to endeavour to check the inevitable ruin of what was great and splendid, but will never be so again? . . . Will the hypostyle hall, with its rebuilt columns bearing but a few scars of time, with its architraves, in part false, impress the mind with its majesty of yore? And when the magnificent débris of the pylons has been converted into regular walls, shall we feel that we really enter the house of the great god Amon? Is not the real Thebes the Thebes in ruins, where death is in its place, and not the city restored, where the pulse of life will beat nevermore?

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[1] *Rapport de 1905.*

These distressing questions obtrude themselves upon our minds when we see modern activity struggling with the mystery of ancient ruins. I remember one day watching the descent, along an incline, of a venerable architrave. The enormous stone was strewn with palm-leaves, covered with flags, in order to ward off any bad omen; the fellahs pulled at the ropes and responded in a ringing voice to the shouts of an overseer, in unison applying their energy to the task as he addressed successively his invocations to Allah. While the stone was sliding, I imagined a like scene in the same place three thousand years ago, when the block, brought from the quarries of Silsileh, was drawn up the slope, towed along in the same manner to the sound of similar songs. Then also, the stone was perhaps venerated and adorned like a saint; perhaps the same story was related about it, as about many another stone. We may decipher in the quarry of Ouady-Hammamât the following:

Miracle . . . that came to pass in those days . . . ;

> as the workmen descended the mountain, lo! a marvellous gazelle appeared; she walked in front, leading our people, who followed with their eyes fixed upon her. Never turned she her head until she reached this stone, in the sacred mountain. . . . Then she brought forth her little fawn on this stone, before the eyes of the whole army; her neck was cut, she was burnt upon the stone with incense, and the block arrived safely in Egypt. . . .[1]

Nowadays, it is in the name of Mahomet that the stones descend or are raised, submissive though touched by the hands of the unbelievers. It was in vain that the gazelle shed her blood, and that the ancient workmen applied their hard labour! The work to which so many thousands of beings devoted their lives for centuries, could not escape ultimate ruin; yet a monument loses something of its mystery and lofty beauty when engineers and archæologists come to test its weaknesses, clear its ruins, or raise its walls.

The work carried on in Egypt is not, however, prompted by curiosity. The restoration of the temples is a necessary evil for thus greater disasters are averted. The purpose is not to gratify the visitor's eye by presenting to his view unbroken lines and structures in their entirety.

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[1] Erman, *Wunderzeichen in Hammamât*, ap. *Zeitschrift für ægyptische Sprache*, xxix, p. 60.

Beauty of outline is not the only attractive feature of the Egyptian temples: it would perhaps be better policy to leave to their fate these picturesque ruins, if it were the artists only who took an interest in them. But these monuments and walls are covered with figures and texts of unique interest in connection with the history of ideas and of men: to rescue from destruction these remaining annals of mankind, these fragments of rituals and of theogonies, is to preserve for humanity its family-papers or title-deeds, and its inheritance from the dim ages. That is why it is useful and necessary to rebuild hypostyle halls and pylons. Artists and those with delicate sensibilities may rest assured that those are pious hands that touch the sacred stones!

CHAPTER II

PHARAONIC DIPLOMACY

TOWARD the end of the summer of 1887, in a rarely frequented district of Middle Egypt, at a spot near the village of Haggi-Kandil, which is inhabited by the Beduins of El-Amarna, some fellahs, in search of building material furnished by the old temples, which are their inexhaustible quarries, were unconcernedly pulling down portions of the walls forming the appendage of a large building now identified as a palace of Amenôphis IV (fifteenth century before our era).

Amenôphis IV was the son of Amenôphis III and of that Queen Tii whose seals have been found in the Mycenæan palaces of Crete and Greece. Egypt was at that time the ruler of the East, over which it had held sway ever since the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth dynasty had established their sovereignty over the Eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and hither Asia. In order to be nearer the Delta and Syria, Amenôphis IV had abandoned Thebes, the capital of his fathers; north of Siût, in Middle Egypt, he built his new city of Khounatonou. These were the ruins which our fellahs were pillaging.

In clearing the rubbish from the ground, they hit at once on something much better than they had expected: fine bricks, some baked, some unbaked; some square, others oblong; the grain of these bricks was very fine and their colour varied from black to yellow and red. They were excellent materials for our masons; did one of them try to wipe off the secular dust or was it a puff of wind that blew away the sand lodged in the pores of the ancient clay? Suddenly it was noticed that there were curious signs upon the tablets, which seemed to have been scratched upon them with a stylus and which were accurately divided by regular lines. Every peasant in Egypt knows that his soil conceals treasures: consequently the bricks and clay tablets bearing inscriptions were treated with respect. After further digging, two hiding-places in the form of wells soon appeared which were filled with engraved tablets. The treasures were heaped up in baskets fastened to the backs of donkeys, and, a few days later, the dealers in antiquities at Akhmi, Luxor, and Cairo had on sale part of the inscriptions.

The first scholars informed of the find were M. Bouriant, then Director of the French School in Cairo, and M. Grébaut, then Director of the Service des Antiquités; they bought a few specimens, and, much amazed to find in Egypt a stock of Babylonian tablets, written in cuneiform, they sent the inscribed tablets to the most important Assyriologists: M. Oppert, professor at the Collège de France, and Mr. Sayce of London. The surprise was so great that the tablets were at first suspected of being spurious and were discarded by the specialists. But when the rumour was spread that there existed hundreds—some said thousands—of tablets bearing inscriptions, it became improbable that the forger had manufactured so many.

The museums in London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, made a few timid purchases; the majority of the tablets passed into the hands of Daninos-Pasha of Alexandria, and of the collector Graf, who sold them to the Museum of Berlin. After the month of April, 1886, not a vestige of doubt remained; Mr. Sayce in London deciphered the names of Babylonian kings and Syrian dynasts; the great Egyptologist in Berlin, Mr. Adolf Erman, read the cartouches of the Pharaohs, Amenôphis III, and Amenôphis IV, written in cuneiform; it was soon discovered that these tablets were missives of marvellous interest, exchanged, in the time of the Egyptian hegemony in Asia, between the princes of Syria and of kingdoms adjacent to it, and their overlords, the Pharaohs. It was the oldest diplomatic correspondence known dating thirty-four centuries back—that the donkeys had carried in their baskets, raised for once to the dignity of a diplomatic mail-bag.

Is it not sad to have to confess that, on this occasion, the critical acumen of the scholars was more injurious to the tablets than the ignorance of the fellahs? Of course, more than one tablet was crumbled by the pick of the excavators, or broken in pieces while being conveyed on the back of a donkey. An accident of the same kind happened to the royal papyrus now preserved at Turin but irreparably mutilated. It was found intact, and put in a jar to be transported on the back of a donkey, but when the jar was uncovered, the papyrus was found in bits; its pieces, pasted together, are still the most precious chronological document of the history of Egypt. The tablets of El-Amarna, disdained by merchants, refused by scholars, suffered irreparable damage in the course of their wanderings. There remain hardly three hundred of them; perhaps there were twice as many in the beginning. At least, those that remain to us are to-day valued at their proper worth, as they are considered a priceless acquisition. The Assyriologists of every country —in England, Sayce and Budge; in Germany, Bezold and Winckler; in France, Halévy, Delattre, and Scheil—have translated and commented upon these texts, and as a result of their searching labours the meaning of these tablets has become a matter of common knowledge.

As soon as the first deciphering of all these tablets enabled one to get a hint of their meaning, it was obvious that the pieces of this diplomatic correspondence had been classified in series; there were six letters of a king of Babylon, nine of the king of Alasia, four of the king of Mitanni,—all of them dealing with particular cases and accounting for long-pursued negotiations. A certain man, Rib-Addi, had sent forty-six missives; others, such as Arad-Hiba of Jerusalem, and Azirou, governor of a Syrian city, had written from five to ten letters; and about a hundred other correspondents are represented by one or two letters. We have thus to do with notes and reports of an official character; on one of the tablets mention is made of the "repository for archives in the royal palace"; one letter, quoted below, invites the Pharaoh to refer to the notes filed in his offices. The two rooms in ruins, still to be seen in El-Amarna, were perhaps a kind of repository for the archives of the Pharaonic Foreign Office.

This repository was scarcely more than a store-house where the tablets were piled up, like old papers in the storerooms of our public buildings. A short inscription, in Egyptian characters, written in the margin of a cuneiform despatch, informs us that the repository was originally at Thebes, the seat of the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth dynasty; when Amenôphis IV left Thebes for Khounatonou (El-Amarna), in order to found a new religious and political capital, he took with him his civil service, and the diplomatic archives were placed in a modest annex of his palace.

Some information has come down to us regarding the staff of officials attached to the archives: a seal has been found, engraved with the name of "Tetou-nou, the man of Shamas-niki." Tetou-nou, as his name indicates, was an Egyptian; his office seems to have been that of scribe in the service of Shamas-niki, who was certainly a Babylonian. Professor Flinders Petrie, who, in 1891, excavated thoroughly that part of El-Amarna, has deciphered a new name, that of a functionary, written in ink on a block: "the royal scribe Ra-Apii." He believes, not without foundation, that he was the Egyptian director of this service, and had under his command the Babylonian Shamas-niki, who was in turn assisted by the Egyptian Tetou-nou.[1]

The presence of a foreigner, of a Babylonian, in this Pharaonic ministry is explained by the fact that all the diplomatic documents are written in cuneiform characters, that is, characters foreign to Egypt. The use of this writing at the Pharaonic court was an absolute innovation; no previous document shows any trace of it; yet we ought not to be astonished that a foreigner was appointed to this Foreign Office. Egyptian hieroglyphics represent letters, syllabic sounds, and ideas, by means of men, animals, plants, and diverse other things reproduced with the most scrupulous accuracy; the signs are very easy to recognise, and to Egyptologists the reading of them at sight is a fascinating occupation that presents little difficulty. The characters of the Babylonians, on the contrary, which originally comprised figures similar to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, soon deteriorated into stiff conventional figures, no longer bearing resemblance to the object represented.

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[1] Sayce *ap*. Fl. Petrie, *El-Amarna*, p. 23.

The use of clay tablets, instead of papyrus, and of a style for inscribing the signs led the scribes of the Euphrates to replace the sinuous outlines of a human figure, or of an animal, or the shape of an object by a series of rigid strokes, to which the style gave the appearance of a nail or wedge (whence the name cuneiform, from the Latin *cuneus*, wedge). Little by little, a star, the head of an animal, a human hand, became merely a succession of scratches arranged along vertical or horizontal lines; to-day, the inexperienced eye no longer recognises in them the figures which they were intended to represent, any more than in the case of the Chinese signs, which are, likewise, silhouettes of beings and things, though conventionalised beyond recognition.

On the other hand, if the cuneiform writing is not attractive to the eye, it has the advantage of being clean-cut and easy to trace. That is why—as the tablets of El-Amarna teach us—it was adopted in all Western Asia, having been in use probably since the almost legendary time of the conquest of Syria and Mesopotamia by Sargon, the elder, King of Babylonia (3500 years B.C.).

> The system of writing in these letters [M. Halévy tells us] is the Babylonian cursive; the language is the

ordinary Babylonian, which was then the language used for literary purposes, not only by Semitic people of the North, but by all the peoples of the Taurus and Amanus who had some degree of civilisation. Along the upper part of the Euphrates, the Babylonian system of writing had been adjusted to the non-Semitic dialects used in these countries.

It is this last very curious circumstance that accounts for the fact that two letters, found among the El-Amarna collection, were written in cuneiform signs, but in a language still unknown: that of Mitanni. We can read the sounds, but not the sense of these letters! A few Indo-European peoples of hither Asia had also adopted the Babylonian cuneiform as a vehicle of their language; Musée Guimet, for instance, possesses several texts of an Indo-European language, written in cuneiform, which were collected by M. Chantre in Cappadocia.

Though Egypt was, owing to its propinquity, in touch with Babylonian civilisation, which was disseminated through writings, the Egyptian officials, appointed to the office of international correspondence, needed a long initiation in order to fill properly their duties of translators and scribes. The foreign language and writing were not easy to acquire and had to be learned from a specially prepared vocabulary, some fragments of which Professor Petrie found. These are bricks carefully divided into three columns; in the first is written the sign of the writing, or ideogram; in the second, its transcription into the syllabic equivalents of the Semitic-Babylonian dialect in use among the various peoples of Western Asia; in the third, the pronunciation of this sign in Sumerian, that is to say, in the original Babylonian language. One of these treatises contains the statement that the vocabulary was drawn up "by order of the king of Egypt."

The Pharaoh certainly placed much importance on a thorough study of the foreign language, for a knowledge of the Sumerian transcription was not really necessary, except for those who wished to master the cuneiform completely.[1]

The attention paid to this foreign language is, however, explicable, when one takes into consideration that not only the messages of Asiatic princes or chiefs were composed in it, but that it was used also by the Pharaohs themselves. A long letter from Amenôphis III to a king of Babylon is composed in the same dialect as the message to which it is a reply;[2] one of the royal princes of Egypt wrote to his royal father in cuneiform; the Egyptian governors corresponded with the offices of the metropolis in the Babylonian language and not in Egyptian hieroglyphics.[1] The fact that no other language than this was employed for diplomatic correspondence is in itself of great importance, especially if one wants to compare the stages of culture which Chaldea and Egypt had reached in the fifteenth century before our era. From an historic point of view, however, this evidence is also of great interest. It justifies us in reaching the conclusion that the Pharaohs showed, in the administration of their Asiatic provinces, an adaptability and a political spirit that was, to say the least, unexpected. A more detailed study of their rule would surprise those who believe that the government of tributary lands and the exercise of diplomacy at long range are modern arts, unknown to antiquity.

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[1] Petrie, *El-Amarna*, Pl. XXXII, 5.

[2] Revue Sémitique, 1893, p. 49.

Egypt never considered herself safe, face to face with Asia, unless she kept control of the Syrian route, along which Asiatic invaders repeatedly found their way into the Delta through Thabor, Jaffa, and Gaza. Therefore, after the Pharaohs of the XVIIth dynasty had driven back the invaders called Shepherds, or Hyksos, beyond the Isthmus of Suez, all their successors of the XVIIIth dynasty (about 1500 B.C.), the Thothmes and the Amenôphis, occupied the towns along the coast: Gaza, Ascalon, Tyre, Sidon, Arad; from there, they proceeded to the gorge of Mageddo, the key to Palestine, and to the passes of Qodshou, the entrance of the valley of the Orontes and of the upper Euphrates.

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, i, p. 213, 215.

The coast and the nearest Syrian plateaux were under the direct influence of the Pharaohs. On the coast flourished already those republics having a Semitic language and an oligarchic constitution, that the Greeks later called Phœnicians; the inland, especially Jerusalem and Canaan, was occupied by other Semites. These were not the Hebrews of Moses's day: the Exodus had not perhaps as yet been undertaken; at any rate, had not been completed. The Hebrews were still in Egypt, where they wandered in the deserts of Sinai and the plains beyond the Jordan. Beyond, in Northern Asia, there extended up to the Persian Gulf empires both of recent and of ancient origin: the kingdom of Alasia on the lower Orontes, the kingdom of Mitanni on the east of the Euphrates, the kingdom of Assur on the middle Tiger, the kingdom of Kardounyash, which had inherited the power of Babylon, on the lower Euphrates.

It was the petty princes of the coast and the upland as well as the kings of the surrounding states, who exchanged the letters discovered at El-Amarna with the Pharaohs, Amenôphis III and Amenôphis IV. The former were vassals; the latter, allies.

The letters[1] emanating from the cities along the Syrian coast, from Palestine and the valley of the Orontes, in a word, from the Egyptian province of Syria, prove that the Pharaohs were not represented in any of these cities, either by resident Egyptian officials, or by a standing army. At Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Jerusalem, we find "adherents of the king" called *khazani;* "their cities belong to them; their subjects bow their heads in submission to them." These were not Egyptians. Their names give evidence that they were natives of the country; often they were descended from families of long standing in the region; they might bear the title of kings; sometimes the *khazani* were the successors of the kings. At any rate, the Egyptian policy seems to have favoured a divided oligarchy, to prevent the establishment among the strange peoples of a monarchy more dangerous in its influence. In certain cities, Arad and Tounipou, for instance, there were neither kings nor *khazani*, for these cities were little republics: accordingly, instead of an individual correspondent, in such cases it was the council of the Ancients, the "children of the city of Tounipou," or the "inhabitants of the city of Irgeta" who sent missives direct to Pharaoh.[1] At any rate, these places enjoyed self-government and sent their applications to the Egyptian chancery without an intermediary. These local powers expressed their subordination in terms that are amusing because of their excessive humility: "To the king, my lord, my god, my sun, king my lord, this is said: I, *khazanou* of the city . . . thy servant, dust of thy feet, and ground on which thou treadest, the seat of thy chair, stool for thy feet,[2] hoof of thy horses, I roll on my stomach and on my back seven times in the dust, at the feet of my king, of my lord, sun of heaven." The essential function of the *khazani*, their *raison d'être* and distinguishing virtue are thus defined: "I am the servant of the king, the dog of his house, I guard all the country of . . . for the king, my lord."[1]

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[1] Quoted from M. J. Halévy, *Journal Asiatique*, 1890–2, and *Revue Sémitique*, 1893–4. I have also made use of the suggestive articles by P. Delattre (*Revue des Questions historiques*, li–lx, 1892–1896) and the authoritative *Histoire* of G. Maspero.

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[1] *Revue Sémitique*, 1894, p. 16.

[2] Compare with the psalm: *Donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.*

In ordinary times, the correspondence may be summed up in a few phrases: the country is quiet, the orders of the king are obeyed, the tributes are despatched regularly to the Egyptian treasury. Thus the governor of Sidon writes:

> The king, my lord, is informed that the city of Sidon, the slave he has entrusted to me, is quiet. On reading the order of the king, my lord, my heart leaped with joy, I raised my head; my face and my eyes were beaming when I transmitted to my people the order of the king, my lord, . . . thus: thy servant sends thee a hundred oxen and also female slaves. News for the king, my lord, sun of the heaven.[2]

Whenever the Pharaoh sent a messenger, a convoy, or a troop of archers, the *khazanou* had to escort them, provide for their safety, and, according to the case, furnish their food and maintenance: "The king, my lord, sun of heaven, has sent the messenger Hamya to me; thus: I have listened to the order of the king with the greatest attention; I, with my troops and my chariots, with my brothers and my soldiers, we have been to meet thy troops of archers at the place assigned by my king." When the king himself visits his Syrian province, the faithful servant has to provide food for him and his troops: "The king, my lord, with his many troops, returns to his lands; there I have sent cattle and a quantity of oil for the great army of the king, my lord." In some impoverished district in the mountains, the *khazanou* might not be able to perform his duty and furnish supplies; in such a case he excused himself humbly: "May it please the king, my lord, to send for the oil; I have neither horses nor carriages to meet the king, and I have sent my son into the country of the king, my lord."[1]

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1892, i, p. 272; *Revue Sémitique*, 1894, p. 110.

[2] *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, ii, p. 170.

To supervise the perfect execution of his orders, Pharaoh had his messengers, "the eyes and ears of the king in a foreign land," to use the language of the Egyptian protocol. They had precedence of all the native governors; they were, therefore, with few exceptions, Egyptians and high functionaries of the Pharaonic court. Their investigations were greatly feared: "May the king, my lord, ask all his messengers how faithful a servant of the king I am; may the king ask such and such a one; he will see that it is true." These inspectors held, perhaps, a permanent office, but they seem not to have had any fixed residence. They took an active part in difficult cases, but always were obliged to refer these to the Pharaoh.

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[1] *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 304–314; *Journal Asiatique*, 1892, i, p. 297, 318, 325.

Difficult cases were frequent. After reading these letters of El-Amarna the Egyptian province of Syria appears to us to be cut up into little independent territories, perpetually torn apart by rival factions. From *khazani* to *khazani*, conflicts incessantly arose; but these disturbances seemed not to displease the Pharaoh, who found in the situation the secret of his power, bestowed here favour, there meted out displeasure, imposing everywhere his will, as the last resort. His help was constantly applied for: here, against highwaymen pillaging a city, there against some *khazanou* unseating his neighbour, or boldly seizing upon the territories of the nearest city: "Take cognisance, oh king, that the robbers have prompted these cities to rebel against me . . . ; I am like a bird in a cage or a net. . . . Send me some archers of Egypt." The number of defenders requested was not excessive: the governor of Mageddo asked to have *two* arches sent; the governor of Tyre asked for twenty; the governor of Byblos requested four, together with twenty chariots (Egyptian chariots were at this time the most potent factor on the battle-field, and it is from Egypt that the Homeric warriors later borrowed their chariots); even in arduous cases the number of Egyptian soldiers needed did not exceed two hundred.[1] These figures show that the Pharaoh did not maintain permanent garrisons in Syria. The governors employed their own troops; but they wanted Egyptian soldiers, probably as instructors and to act as a staff of officers for the native troops, much in the same way as we organise our colonial armies at the present day.

Among the numerous subjects considered in the correspondence of El-Amarna there are two which are intelligible throughout, or nearly so, and which afford us a vivid picture of the policy pursued by Egypt in Syria. These affairs concern Azirou and Arab-Hiba. The information that follows is derived from researches made by Messrs. Halévy and P. Delattre.

In a district of Northern Phœnicia, called the land of Amouri, the *khazanou* Azirou was accused before Pharaoh by his colleague Rabimour, from Byblos.[2] Azirou, in spite of the protestations of obedience which he sent to the Egyptian deputy Doudou, was accused formally of having killed three kings of neighbouring cities and all the elders of the country, in order to appropriate their territories. Azirou cleared himself by writing to the king that he did so only in self-defence: "The elders of the city of Soumouri did not leave me in peace, and I have in this case committed no crime against the king my master." Then a man intervened in this correspondence, writing dryly: "In the name of the king, thy lord, to the governor of the city of Soumouri." This man was without doubt an Egyptian deputy, who communicated the Pharaoh's reply to the charges brought by Rabimour:

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, i, p. 244, 252; 1892, i, p. 310.

[2] P. Delattre, *Azirou*, ap. *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xiii, p. 215.

> Surely, thou art not with the king, thy lord. If thou wilt be submissive to the king, what will not the king grant thee, as a recompense? But, if thou wishest to act thus, rebellion is in thy heart and thou shalt die, as well as all thy family. Submit to the king, thy lord, and thou shalt live. . . . I say to thee: leave the summit of that mountain [where Azirou had taken refuge] and come to the king, thy lord; or send thy son to the king. Hast thou no descendant who might go? Know that the king is as powerful as the sun in heaven, and that his troops and chariots are numerous in the upper country and in the lower country, from the east to the west. . . .[1]

Summoned to give an account of himself at the Egyptian court, Azirou did not dare to refuse outright: he accordingly wrote to different people, to the deputies Doudou and Khai, and to Pharaoh himself, that he would start with his son, that he is starting, that he has started . . . but he stayed. At the same time that he announced his departure, he mentioned an attack of the king of the Kheta against the city of Tounipou: who would defend this city if he, Azirou, did not stay at his post?

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[1] *Cf.* J. Halévy, *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, ii, p. 176.

"My son and I are good servants of the king; then we shall start immediately . . . ; may my master know that I obey. But the king has ordered me to defend his territory, and now the king of the Kheta is in the country of Noukhassi, in the city of Tounipou, . . . I fear for the territory of my master."

Did Azirou go to Egypt? The records stop just at this critical moment. Judging from what precedes, Azirou probably managed to avoid appearing in person, or sending his son, as a hostage, to Pharaoh.

The second affair, concerning Arad-Hiba, is more intricate still; it has to do with personal frictions between officials, and raises a rather delicate question of diplomatic immunity.[1] Arad-

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[1] J. Halévy. *Un gouverneur de Jérusalem vers la fin du xv^e siècle*

Hiba was a governor of Jerusalem. The name of Israel does not appear anywhere in his letters; the first mention of this name that we know of is on an Egyptian stela of Pharaoh Merneptah (about 1250 B.C.), who boasts of having destroyed Israel in Syria, at a time when, according to tradition, the Israelites were still in Egypt. Nevertheless, Arad-Hiba, as is evidenced by his name, was a Semite. He was opposed in his government by Milkili and Shumardata, native agents of the Egyptian court. These men accused him of having participated with certain robber bands, acting under the instigation of the king of Babylon, Bournabouryash, in the pillage of Palestine. Now, if these mercenaries of the Babylonian king broke the alliance of their master with the king of Egypt, it was because Bournabouryash had been seriously offended. He explained, in a letter addressed to Amenôphis IV, that he had sent an embassy laden with presents to Egypt:

> My agents, who had so far travelled in safety, were stopped suddenly and met with violent death, in Palestine. They had left me, thy good brother, to go to thee, when, upon their arrival in the city of Acre, those who escorted them (sent by the Pharaoh) killed my messengers and took possession of the

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av J. C., ap. *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 13. Cf. *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, ii, p. 514.

presents. . . . It is Shumardata who cut off the feet of my men and pulled out their fingers; as for the other, he encouraged the aggressor to stamp on their heads. . . . Question these men, make investigations, gather information, and thou wilt hear the truth. The country of Palestine is thy country, and its kings are thy vassals; it is in thy country that damage has been done to me; make inquiry, have restored the gold that has been taken, have put to death those who have killed my men, and let the blood which they have shed flow back upon them. If thou dost not put these people to death, my generals shall go and kill all the men and messengers, so that henceforth all friendship between us shall cease, and their soldiers shall treat thee as an enemy.[1]

These threats were carried out. Shumardata, however, accused Arad-Hiba of favouring the devices of the Babylonians, and the question of the murder of messengers was lost sight of as the personal rivalry of the agents of the Egyptian king came to the fore. Arad-Hiba sends to the king vehement protestations:

"Who has cast doubt upon my actions by slandering me before the king, my lord, saying: 'Arad-Hiba has betrayed his lord'? Behold: it is neither my father's nor my mother's people who have secured this place for me; it is the arm of the powerful king that has enabled me to enter the house of my father. Why should I be guilty of infidelity and disloyalty to the king?"[1]

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1899, ii, p. 325.

Arad-Hiba would have liked to justify himself, personally: "I said to myself: I shall go to the king, and I shall see the cities of the king, but I have a strong enemy opposed to me, and I cannot come before the king."

But, desirous of leaving nothing untried in order to attain his end, he added to three of his despatches a postscript addressed to the scribe of the king:

"To the scribe of my lord, the king, this is said: I, Arad-Hiba, thy servant, I throw myself at the feet of my lord. I am thy servant. Speak favourably of me to my lord, the king. I am the servant of the king and also thine."[2]

It is evident that as far back as the XVIIIth dynasty, the approbation of an influential office-holder was instrumental in bringing about a happy issue of affairs. The word of commendation was, however, in this case of no avail. It seems that Amenôphis IV paid heed rather to Shumardata and Milkili and ordered them to subdue Arad-Hiba. For a long time, Palestine was devastated by robbers and mercenary troops, paid by the rival governors. Arad-Hiba left Jerusalem to make war in Palestine and delivered his office into the hands of a lady, Belitneshi, who wrote twice in his favour to the Pharaoh.[1] It is not known how the struggle ended. Bournabouryash and Amenôphis IV were reconciled; as for Arad-Hiba, in all probability he finally succumbed in the conflict of rival ambitions

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1891, ii, p. 519.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1891, ii, p. 524, 527, 529.

In the course of these disturbances, which transformed the rich province of Syria into a battle-field, the Pharaohs often showed an indifference that would appear inexplicable, had it not been intentional. We know from the lamentations of their vassals, that their replies to denunciations or complaints were slow in coming if they came at all. Read this letter from the little republic of Tounipou, expressing doubt whether the Pharaoh is its protector or not:

> The city of Tounipou, thy servant, asks: Who was it that formerly showed favour to the city of Tounipou? Was it not Amenôphis III, who honoured her? Since then, the gods and the statue of the king of Egypt, our lord, have remained in the city of Tounipou. Our lord may refer to the archives of the time, if there is any doubt about our belonging to our lord, the king of Egypt? . . . We have already sent twenty letters to the king, our lord, and our messen-

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1892, i, p. 302–304.

gers have stayed with our lord. . . . Now the city of Tounipou, thy city, weeps, its tears flow, and there is nobody to help us. . . . We have already sent twenty letters to the king of Egypt, and not a single reply has come to us from our lord.[1]

More than a hundred such letters exist among the records of El-Amarna. Shall we accuse the Foreign Office of Egypt of inveterate negligence? It seems more just to admit that the oriental policy of procrastination, of prudence, of studied inertia, was already in favour in the Pharaonic diplomacy! The king of Egypt probably knew how to apportion his efforts according to the importance of the case in dispute; in many instances, to gain time, to let things run their course, and to wait until the decisive moment for interfering arrived, was the best means for putting an end to the petty strife that had become almost chronic in the protectorate country. Besides, intestine discords were necessary for the maintenance of a foreign hegemony: to create division among his subjects in order to keep any faction from becoming too powerful, this policy successfully pursued accounts for the power of the Pharaoh in a country where he deigned to leave the images of his gods and of his own divine personage,[1] but where he kept no longer any garrisons, where he had only a body of diplomats and a staff of officers.

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[1] *Revue Sémitique*, 1894, p. 16.

In dealing with the great kingdoms of the Taurus and the Euphrates: Alasia, Mitanni, Assyria, Kardouniash (Babylon) a different method of procedure was in force. The aim of the Pharaohs was to form all around their Syrian provinces a border of buffer-states, in order to check the collisions between the restless populations of Asia Minor, the most threatening of which were the Kheta, and the populations of Canaan. This rôle of buffer-states could be filled by the old kingdoms of Assur and of Babylon, fallen from their former splendour, but still mighty and influential, and also by the new barbarian kingdoms, like Alasia and Mitanni, ruled by upstarts whom the Pharaoh sometimes raised to the dignity of allies.

But here, the relationship was no longer that existing between a sovereign and his vassals: the Pharaoh allowed himself to be treated as an equal by each of these barbarians.

"To the king of Egypt, my brother, be it said: I, the king of Alasia, thy brother, am well, and may it be well with thee, with thy kinship, thy house, thy children, thy wives; I heartily congratulate thee upon the number of chariots and horses thou hast and send my good wishes for thy country of Egypt."[1]

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[1] *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 316.

The king of Assyria, of whom one letter only has been preserved, wrote more dryly:

"To Amenôphis IV, my brother, be it said: Assouroubailit, King of Assyria, the prince, thy brother: Peace to thee, thy kin, thy country."[2]

The tone is more affectionate when the sovereigns are relatives:

"To Amenôphis III, great king of the country of Egypt, my brother, my son-in-law, who loves me and whom I love, be it said:—I, Dushratta, the great king of the country of Mitanni, thy brother, thy father-in-law, who loves thee, I am well, and I send my greetings to thee, my brother and son-in-law to thy kin, thy wives, thy sons, thy chief men."[3]

In his turn, Amenôphis III, writing to the king of Kardounyash, expresses himself in exactly the same terms.[4] We may infer from these extracts that a diplomatic protocol prevailed already at that time and that the exchanged correspondence was shaped in accordance with an established epistolary formula that admitted of little latitude in the expression of mutual regard.

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1890, ii, p. 335.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 331.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1890, ii, p. 348.

[4] *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 49.

After the exchange of the usual salutations, the sovereigns informed each other of the state of their health. A letter from Bournabouryash to Amenôphis IV shows in this respect a susceptibility, rather amusing:

> Since the day when the messenger of my brother came, I have not been well. During my ailment, my brother did not comfort me. I felt angry with my brother, saying: "Has my brother not heard that I am ill? Why does he not send his messenger, and why does he not interest himself in me?" The messenger of my brother replied: "Thy country is not near enough for thy brother to have known about thy illness, and to have sent a messenger to learn news about thee." . . . Indeed, when I thereupon asked my own messenger, he said to me: "It is a very long journey." Since then, I have been no more angry with my brother. . . .[1]

Dushratta, the king of Mitanni, gives expression to violent grief when he hears of the death of Amenôphis III, and he writes to the new king thus:

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1890, ii, p. 321.

"When thy father was about to die, . . . that day, I wept, and I became quite ill, and was ready to die . . . [but I knew the accession] of the eldest son of Amenôphis and of Tii . . . and I said: 'Amenôphis is not dead.' . . ."[1] This letter is badly mutilated, but these tokens of keen sympathy survive in its fragments.

After the exchange of compliments serious affairs were dealt with: political alliances, matrimonial negotiations, international trading. From the time when Thothmes III conquered the land of Canaan, the Egyptian court tried to make these conquests enduring by means of alliances. Amenôphis IV is reminded of this policy by each of his correspondents, as soon as he ascends the throne:

"My king, now that thou hast ascended the throne of thy father, let us establish between us the same relation of amity that existed between thy father and myself, who were agreed to exchange presents. And this my vow, that I made to thy father, accept it and let us make it mutually binding."[2]

It was indispensable for the security of the Pharaoh in Syria that the rebellious cities, negligible if unaided from without, should find no support in Babylon or in Nineveh. On the other hand, if the Pharaoh favoured some of his neighbours by making an alliance with them, it was tantamount to raising them above their rivals and assuring their power in Asia. The reciprocal interest, that the Egyptian and the Babylonian kings found in such a policy, is shown very clearly in a letter from Bournabouryash, reproaching Amenôphis IV for his indifference:

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, p. 423.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

> In the time of my father Kourigalzou, a king of Canaan sent him a message: "Let us enter the city of Karmishat, let us march against Pharaoh together." My father sent in reply this message: "Renounce any understanding with me; if thou wilt treat the king of Egypt as an enemy, look for another ally; I shall not go, I shall not plunder his country, for he is my ally." It is thus that my father, on account of his love of thine, refused to listen to him.[1]

This said, Bournabouryash takes up the subject that lies near his heart:

"To-day, the Assyrian king is my vassal; I do not need to tell thee why he came to solicit thy friendship; if thou lovest me, let no treaty be made [between you]; drive him far away."

But the interest of the Pharaoh was to keep an equal balance among all the other kings; a letter from the king of Assyria informs us that Egyptian messengers were sent to him and that the same traditional alliance still existed between Thebes and Nineveh, as between Thebes and Babylon.[1]

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, p. 328.

Ties of blood were necessary to maintain and facilitate diplomatic relationships; matrimonial negotiations were, as in our day, one of the important tasks entrusted to the Asiatic or Egyptian ambassadors. We have full information regarding their dealings with the kings of Mitanni and of Babylon, concerning such matrimonial alliances.

We see, from the letters of Dushratta, king of Mitanni, with what persistence the Pharaohs tried to obtain the hand of the barbarian princesses whose presence in the Theban harem insured the fidelity of their fathers to Egyptian politics. Sitatama, grandfather of Dushratta, did not dispose of the hand of his daughter until seven messages had been sent by Thothmes IV; Amenôphis III had to ask six times for the sister of Dushratta, and when the latter was asked to give his own daughter, Tadouhipa, to Amenôphis IV, he gave proof of a most unusual goodwill in replying immediately: "I give my daughter to thee." This is how the negotiation was conducted.[1] Amenôphis IV, then merely a royal prince, sent an ambassador extraordinary, named Mane, laden with presents and with a letter from Amenôphis III, thus worded:

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[1] None of these treaties of alliance have come down to us, but the walls of the Theban temples have preserved the copy of a treaty made, a century later, between Ramses II and the king of the Kheta. The original was engraved on a silver tablet and faithfully reproduced the clauses of a former treaty. There is no doubt that contracts of the same form were exchanged even from the time of the Amenôphis.

"What I send thee at present is nothing, . . . but if thou grantest me the wife whom I desire, the presents will come [in plenty]."

Dushratta's messengers were shown a heap of gold, countless presents intended for the father of the future queen. Dushratta received the Egyptian ambassador and, having accepted the presents, sent this word to the royal suitor:

"A strong friendship united thy father and me; now I shall have still more affection for thee, my son."[2] This magnanimity did not hinder Dushratta from protesting bitterly later on that he had been defrauded of a part of the presents promised, which were never delivered.

The negotiation of matrimonia affairs with the Babylonian court was occasionally beset with difficulties. Amenôphis III married the sister of Kallima-Sin, king of Kardounyash; a few years later he claimed, as a new wife, the daughter of Kallima-Sin. The latter refused. His objection to the match was not influenced by the thought that his daughter, Zouharti, would find her own aunt among the number of her rivals, but was based on the fact that, since his sister had entered the harem of the Pharaoh, none of the Babylonian messengers had ever seen her, or had heard any news about her. What does Pharaoh do with his foreign wives? Before giving up his daughter, Kallima-Sin would like to be informed. The incident was doubtless thought to be of some consequence, for Amenôphis III gives a detailed account of the circumstances in the only letter of his that has been preserved.[1]

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, p. 421. Cf. *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 124, and *Zeitschrift für ægyptische Sprache*, 1890, p. 114.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 408–409.

"I have knowledge," he writes to Kallima-Sin, "of the word thou didst address to me: 'How canst thou ask for my daughter in marriage while my sister, whom my father gave thee, is in thy keeping, though no one has seen her; tell me, is she living or is she dead?'"

It is not known whether anything happened to the Babylonian princess or not; Amenôphis replied only in vague terms; he quoted other complaints addressed to him by his correspondent. Kallima-Sin had related how, one day, his messenger had been led into the harem, when all Pharaoh's wives were assembled, and had been told: "Here is thy lady before thee." The messenger did not recognise her and could not find out which of these wives was the sister of his king. Regarding that, Pharaoh replied to Kallima-Sin: "Thou didst not send a noble man, one who, having known thy sister [formerly] and having talked to her would have been able to recognise her and carry on a conversation with her. The messengers whom thou sendest are men of low condition; for example, Zargara is a common drover of cattle; there is not one [of thy messengers] who ever approached thy father."

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[1] *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 49.

But Kallima-Sin replies:

"It might have been any noble girl my messengers saw at thy house; the question is, who could assure them [it was my sister]"

Then, another reply from Pharaoh:

"If thy sister had died, what would have been the object in withholding the truth from thee?"

The scene is very odd, and can be explained without recourse to the theory that a crime was committed; the boor, promoted to the rank of an ambassador by Kallima-Sin, may have been, upon entering the harem of Pharaoh, so abashed that he lost the power of sizing up beings and things. We may imagine that he made a sad figure, this poor Asiatic fellow, ill clad and without manners, when he found himself suddenly, amid a hum of voices, in the presence of an ironic Pharaoh and a hundred laughing, mocking queens, sparkling with jewels, and bare beneath their transparent veils. A passage from the *Aventures de Sinouhit*[1] affords us a glimpse of what may well have happened:

Sinouhit, the hero of this tale, lived for a long time exiled in Asia; recalled by royal clemency, he was taken before Pharaoh, in the presence of the queens and of the court. Sinouhit felt his legs quiver beneath him and lost consciousness, when the King said to the Queen: "There is Sinouhit returning, rigged out like an Asiatic!" Whereupon the Queen burst out laughing, and all the royal children joined in the laugh. Now, Sinouhit was a great Egyptian lord; how much more ridiculous in appearance must have been the messenger of Kallima-Sin?

The solicitude of the Babylonian king is certainly touching. It may not have been a very enviable lot, that which awaited these princesses, transplanted from barbarian courts, from the countries of Mitanni, or of the Kheta, or even from the refined court of Babylon, into this Egyptian society, where manners, habits, speech, ideas were so different! In truth, the future queens took with them a retinue of women and servants, several hundreds sometimes,[1] who composed their own "house" or "chapel," and occupied much the same position as did the Florentines who accompanied to France the princesses of the Médicis family, or the Frenchmen who escorted Queen Henrietta to London. Sometimes even, the El-Amarna letters inform us, a statue of Our-Lady-Ishtar-Astarte was sent from Asia to comfort them.[2] But, at the end of a few months, the good goddess returned to her native country, and with her departure was severed the last link binding the queens to the days of their childhood.

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[1] A tale of the XIIth dynasty. *Cf.* Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Egypt ancienne*, 3d edition, p. 78.

Another point is made manifest to us by these letters. The Pharaohs did not reciprocate willingly, but generally refused their daughters or their sisters to their Asiatic allies. The daughters of the "divine blood" were not for these rough soldiers; the Egyptian Marie-Louises were not to be given up to the Napoleons of Mitanni or of Kardounyash! Indignant at this attitude a king of Babylon makes a haughty reply:

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[1] A legend engraved on an Egyptian scarab tells us that 317 women accompanied to Egypt the princess Kilagipa of Mitanni, who was to be married to Amenôphis III. Cf. *Zeitschrift für ægyptische Sprache*, 1880, p. 81; 1890, p. 112.

[2] *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 124.

> When I asked for thy daughter's hand, thou hast replied to me saying: "The daughter of the king of Egypt has never been given to anybody. . . ." When these words were brought to me, I sent the following reply: "If thou sendest her to me unwillingly, I prefer that thou dost not send her at all. Thou dost not show me the kindness of a brother. When thou madest known to me thy intention of consolidating our alliance by a marriage, I replied with all the kindness of a brother . . . and now, my brother when I express the desire of cementing our relation by marriage, why dost thou refuse me thy daughter? Why dost thou not give her to me? If I had refused thee anything, there would be some explanation for thy conduct, but my daughters were at thy disposal; I refused thee nothing.[1]

The Pharaohs, on the other hand, understood how to come to terms with their Asiatic allies. If they refused to send them wives, they sent them gold; this was the secret of their invincible influence, and the balm for all humiliation.

"Send me gold, . . . I am going to send for thy gold; . . . formerly thy father sent to my father much gold. . . . Thou shouldst send me the same quantity of gold that thy father sent. . . ."[1] Demands of that kind repeatedly occur in the El-Amarna letters; there is perhaps not a single one in which is not expressed this desire for gold, which was paid out unstintingly by the Pharaohs and was greedily pocketed by the covetous Asiatics. The Pharaohs indeed were extremely rich; Abyssinia, the mines of Etbaye and Sinai supplied them profusely with washed gold, native gold, and precious stones; and there was a proverb, often alluded to by the kings of Asia, that "in Egypt, Pharaoh has gold as plentiful as dust, in lavish supply" . . . "the dust of roads is in that country pure gold. . . ."[2]

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, 1890, ii, p. 310.

It was not only avarice that urged the Asiatic allies to ask for gold: they demanded it on the ground that the payments were provided for in the treaties of commerce duly attached to the treaties confirmed by blood alliance. All these Semitic kings appear to be cunning merchants, clever manufacturers, who encouraged, as best they could, the working of metals, already flourishing in their countries. In the bas-reliefs of

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[1] *Journal Asiatique*, p. 311, 317, 322, 328, 341. Cf. *Revue Sémitique*, 1893, p. 121.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1890, ii, p. 331, 353, 425.

Egyptian temples, or in the paintings of the Theban tombs, we can see, in the hands of tribute-bearers, the curious products of the Syrian and Chaldean craftsmen: vessels of gold, silver, or bronze; vases for the table, decorated with flowers or animals borrowed from the Asiatic surroundings; elaborately chiselled weapons; elephants' teeth; furniture; stuffs; jewels of finest workmanship. But it seems that the raw materials of the finest quality had to be imported for use in this industry: Egypt alone could furnish them, and cheaply, provided Pharaoh was willing. Therefore, every good service rendered to him in political matters was appraised at its proper value and was paid for in precious metal; Pharaoh's allies were determined to claim their due and not to be deceived in the quality of the goods received. Numerous are the claims of that kind:

"The messenger whom you sent," writes Bournabouryash to Amenôphis IV, "brought twenty minas of imperfect gold which, put in the melting-pot, did not yield so much as five minas of pure gold . . ."; or: "The wedges of gold, that my brother had not examined, when I sent them to the melting-pot to be melted, were not accepted, but sent back to me. . . ."[1]

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[1] *Journ. Asiatique*, p. 428, and 1891, i, p. 202. According to the

It must be added that the Asiatic kings knew how to give as well as to receive presents, and their letters often announce the sending of weapons, ivory, and jewels. From this point of view, the lists of articles forming the dowry of the princesses of Mitanni and of Babylon are very significant: hundreds of lines are required for the enumeration of the necklaces, rings, bracelets, ornaments of all kinds, furniture, linen, and stuffs that were sent to Egypt by caravans, too often plundered on the way. To determine exactly what all these objects were and the material they were made of is unfortunately not possible, in the present state of oriental philology. Those passages, however, that lend themselves to interpretation are sufficient to give a satisfactory idea of Asiatic industry at that time; it seems then quite natural that the treaty between Ramses II and the Kheta should include a clause relative to the artistic crafts: the exalted parties to the contract mutually agreeing not to entice away the artisans belonging to the other or to attempt to extort the secrets of their industry.

Assyriologist, Father Delattre, several kings in Asia sent to Egypt for ore that was transformed, in their countries, into works of art. These works of art were in turn, upon payment of a commission, returned to Pharaoh.

It is due to this diplomacy, which to secure its ends resorted to political negotiations, matrimonial alliances, and business transactions, that the Pharaohs were able to maintain for one hundred and fifty years — until the inroad of a formidable migratory horde—the protectorate of Syria, without the burden of an administrative machinery brought from Egypt, and without necessitating a military occupation. However mutilated may be the letters of El-Amarna, they furnish the proof that diplomacy does not date from the sixteenth century, as we are told with too much assurance by modern historians. The more secrets antiquity, and especially the antiquity of the East, discloses, the more shall we recognise that human ideas and customs are as old as the material world, and that every innovation is scarcely more than a renovation.

It would be interesting to know the Machiavels, Talleyrands, and Metternichs who were responsible for the policy of the Egyptian Foreign Office; but few names have come down to us from the ancient history of the East; what the documents reveal is rather the collective work of generations. Yet, to make up for official records, we have popular literature: the tales of ancient Egypt prove that there were in that country as everywhere in the world, great intriguers, diplomats in the guise of adventurers to whom the delicate and perilous[1] negotiations, from which proceed love or hatred, peace or war, prosperity or economic decadence, assured glory and renown.

In this light appears to us the messenger, whose adventures are told in *The Journey of an Egyptian*. The scribe who wrote this story predicts that his hero will experience dangers, glory, and deeds of love:

> I will show thee the way that goes past Mageddo. There thou art, on the brink of a gulf, two thousand cubits deep, strewn with rocks and pebbles, and thou goest along, holding the bow and brandishing thy sword in thy left hand; thou showest it to the chiefs, and thou compellest them to lower their eyes before thy hand. Thou, however, goest alone, without a guide, and thou findest no mountaineer to show thee the direction thou shouldst follow; soon, anguish overcomes thee, thy hair rises on thy head, for the road is not marked out, the abyss is on one side and the abrupt mountain on the other. Finally, entering Jaffa, thou findest there an orchard, blossoming in its season, thou makest a hole in the hedge in order to go in to eat; thou findest there the pretty maid who guards the orchard; she accepts thee for her

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[1] *Cf.* Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Égypte ancienne*, 3d edition, p. 199. In the account of the legendary voyage made by Ounamonou, the messenger, to Syria, the prince of Byblos boasts of having held as prisoners for seventeen years the messengers of Pharaoh and of having finally put them to death.

lover and gives thee her breast in blossom. Thou art discovered, thou declarest who thou art, and all agree that thou art a hero! . . .

The famous Thoutii—who was said to have subdued the rebel city of Jaffa, by introducing his soldiers there, hidden in huge vases, and by brandishing the great stick of Thothmes III—is also a legendary prototype of those Egyptian messengers who shaped the destinies of cities and of kings. Again, in the story of the *Predestined Prince* we find a messenger informing the Prince that it is in the far land of Naharima that he shall meet the princess who can free him of his three evil fates. On the shores of Alasia, there is a priest, Ounamonou, who is likewise a merchant and a diplomat; he manages to foil all the tricks of the wily, petty kings of Syria. The gods of Egypt themselves are well versed in diplomacy: the treaty signed by Ramses II with the king of the Kheta contains a clause stating that one thousand gods stand security for Pharaoh; later on a legend relates that the gods once sent one of them, Khonsu the Theban, as an ambassador, to exorcise the daughter of the prince of Bakhtan.

Thus the poetic cycle has sketched for us in broad outlines a certain type of adventurer who is bold and cunning, a lover of ladies, and a magician. Such a combination of gifts is hardly attainable by mortal man, but it may well be that it represented for the Egyptian the beau-ideal that a "man of career" ought to strive to attain.

CHAPTER III

EGYPT BEFORE THE PYRAMIDS

SUCCESSFUL excavations undertaken during the last fifteen years have allowed us a glimpse of the origin of Egyptian civilisation. Until our knowledge was thus widened, the history of Egypt began for our purposes virtually about one century before the IVth dynasty, which erected the great pyramids, that is about 4000 B.C. The period antedating this dynasty offered only uncertain traditions: according to Manetho (who wrote in the third century B.C. a Greek history of Egypt, of which we have nothing left but chronological summaries), the first two dynasties sprang from Thinis (near the site of Abydos); the third resided at Memphis and probably founded the Memphite kingdom, the pyramids and other monuments of which have come to us.

Of the first kings of Egypt, Manetho has preserved for us only legends; he has, at least, transcribed their names and classified them, according to families or dynasties. Many of these names are recognisable, in spite of the divergencies between the hieroglyphic characters and the Greek transcription, in the lists of kings that the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth and XIXth dynasties had engraved in the temples of Karnak and Abydos. The papyrus known under the designation of "Royal Canon" of Turin, written at the same time, has preserved for us another more complete list, indicating the length of the reign of each king and the total number of years during which each great royal family occupied the throne; but this papyrus is in bits to-day, and many of its precious pieces have been destroyed.

This is the more to be regretted because the document claimed to trace back the Egyptian monarchy to its origin, before even the Ist dynasty. The human kings—according to this record—were preceded by a fabulous number of gods, demi-gods, and "dead" (or "shades"), whose names are mentioned reverentially together with the years of their reign, varying in length from three hundred to three thousand years and more. Manetho has preserved for us a similar nomenclature, and Diodorus of Sicily later repeated this tradition:

The Egyptian priests, reckoning the time that has

> elapsed from the reign of the Sun down to the expedition of Alexander, make it about twenty-three thousand years. They say, and this is evidently a fable, that of the gods who reigned upon earth, the most ancient held the sceptre each for twelve hundred years, and their descendants not less than three hundred. The Egyptians say also that besides heavenly gods there were others, called earthly gods, *who were born mortals*, but who acquired immortality by their great intelligence, and the services they rendered to the human race. Several of them reigned in Egypt. The Sun was the first king of the Egyptians . . . then Saturn reigned, and gave birth to Osiris and Isis, who, having themselves attained royalty, ameliorated social life by their beneficence.[1]

The Egyptian priests possessed the authentic archives of these fabulous times; they have given us edifying accounts of the reign of the king Ra, of his sons Shu and Seb, of the misfortunes of Osiris, persecuted by his brother Set, avenged by his son Horus and by the "followers of Horus." But a *historical* document, even if it were only a fragment, would better answer our purpose! Until the present time, the most ancient records known were the false door of a tomb, bearing the names of Sondou and Perábsen, of the IId dynasty, and a stela with the name of King Zeser of the IIId dynasty engraved on a rock in Sinai. As for the kings of the preceding dynasties, we did not possess any monument that dated from their time.

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[1] Diodorus I, xxvi, 13.

In the absence of texts and figured monuments, could we find in Egypt itself any indications that there was a *prehistoric* civilisation corresponding to the periods studied elsewhere under the name of the "stone age" or "bronze age"? Until recent years, Egyptologists paid little attention to flints and polished stones, for, after the unexpected and unhoped for decipherment of hieroglyphics, the essential task before them had been to collect and translate texts, or to clear temples and tombs: even to-day, this colossal task is scarcely more than begun. But geologists and naturalists came to Egypt, and *they* attempted the solution of problems to which epigraphists and archæologists had remained somewhat indifferent.

When the Suez Canal was inaugurated, in 1869, the Khedive, Ismaïl, generously invited not only rulers but also scholars to come to Egypt. Among those invited were the geologist, Arcelin, the naturalists, Hamy and F. Lenormant, who became interested in the pebbles along the road of the King's Valley, which the Egyptologists had scarcely taken notice of: it was found that they were hatchets, points, and flint knives, resembling the instruments of the neolithic period. Unfortunately, no animal bones, no determined geological layer enabled the scientists to date these flints strewn over the desert. Mariette, the first Director of the Service des Antiquités, pointed out the fact that no evidence warranted the assigning of these flints to the prehistoric period, more especially as the Egyptians had continued to use stone weapons throughout their civilisation.

The first Egyptologists, indeed, were reluctant to give up the idea that Egypt had not known the stone age; from the very beginning, those men of unknown origin, who had settled in Egypt, seem to have enjoyed a superior culture. The alluring conception that there were dynasties of divine beings deluded others besides the ancient Egyptians! Mariette, however, perceived the pertinence of these new researches, and awaited their results: "In order to find evidences of a stone age in Egypt, new excavations must be undertaken, under such conditions that the monuments brought to light may readily be proved to be of human workmanship and may be dated geologically from a period preceding all known history."[1] These excavations Mariette hoped to be able to undertake, but he never had the leisure for them. His successor, M. Maspero, had to face an enormous task, yet he bore in mind Mariette's expectations: before he laid down his work as Director of the Service des Antiquités, in 1886, he re-edited Mariette's memoir on the stone age in Egypt, in order to stimulate researches urgently needed.

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[1] Mariette, *De l'âge de la pierre en Égypte* (1870).

An English archæologist, Professor Flinders Petrie, was the first to carry out this work, of his own accord. Engaged to execute excavations for the Egyptian Exploration Fund and the Egyptian Research Account, he applied to the task qualities which he possessed in an eminent degree, method and observation. M. Petrie was not, at that time, a professional Egyptologist: his interest in archæology was not limited to written memorials, or to "beautiful pieces"; he gave equal attention to small objects, and found pleasure and profit in classifying fragments of pottery and stones to which he devoted as much care as to scarabs and stelæ. He demonstrated by his persevering investigations what can be gathered from the minute study of little objects, to enable one to put any monument found in their vicinity, even though it bear no date or inscription, into the place where it belongs in an archæological or historical series.

But even Flinders Petrie, when he began his excavations, hardly believed in a prehistoric Egypt. On the site of Kahûn, at the entrance of the Fayûm, he cleared, in 1889, a city of the XIIth dynasty; near by, he found a repository in which were hatchets, scrapers, flint knives, and rough pottery. A little farther north, at Meidun, near the pyramid of the King Sneferû (IIId dynasty) and the tombs of the first historic Egyptians, he discovered (during the years 1890 to 1892), objects in flint placed side by side with others in bronze. This could be explained up to this point by the fact, widely recognised, that stone implements continued to be used throughout the entire Egyptian civilisation. But during the winter of 1894–1895, Messrs. Petrie and Quibell found that the sites of Ballas and Toukh (north of Thebes) contained extensive cemeteries of the same type as the isolated specimens found at Meidun: tombs, where skeletons, not mummified, appeared surrounded with flints, pottery, and vases of a style unknown to classic Egypt. When at work in Meidun, Petrie had already had the intuition that he was in the presence of a primitive, ancient, native race; but theory generally outweighs experience; the stone age in Egypt was contrary to theory; and in consequence his private impression had been temporarily suppressed. It was admitted that tombs of so curious a type were those of a *new race*, non-Egyptian, rather Libyan according to appearances, who, either by invasion or by slow infiltration, had come into Egypt after the VIth dynasty, during the much disturbed period that followed the Memphite epoch; this race was supposed to have kept itself for several centuries distinct from the Pharaonic civilisation, retaining its customs and its industry, until it was absorbed by the native population, towards the XIIth dynasty.

This *new race* theory did not survive any length of time. Scarcely had it given to Egyptologists a very plausible, at least a very convenient explanation of the problems that had arisen at Meidun and Ballas, when it was renounced, even by its propounders, in consequence of the illuminating discoveries of Messrs. de Morgan and Amélineau.

M. de Morgan, who became Director of the Service des Antiquités in 1892, was not an Egyptologist, and had not become imbued with any theory. His personal studies and excavations in Caucasus had made him familiar with the problems of the origins of peoples, and with the methods of solving them. Upon arrival in Egypt, he took up the prehistoric question just at the point where

Mariette, and his predecessors, Hamy and Lenormant, had left it:

> I gathered [he wrote in 1895] all the scattered documents, made researches in many places, bought up the flint implements that the merchants had. I was thus gradually led to think that, if some flints belong to the historic period, yet most of them date from a period much more remote, and that there are in the valley of the Nile more abundant evidences of the neolithic age than is generally believed.[1]

The result of his investigations, actively participated in by Messrs. Legrain, Daressy, and Jequier, was embodied in a volume entitled *l'Âge de la pierre et les métaux en Égypte*, in which numerous important documents were faithfully reproduced. It became difficult, from that time, to avoid admitting that prehistoric man existed in Egypt. Now the book was still in the printer's hands, when excavations conducted by M. Amélineau at Abydos and new researches made by M. de Morgan at Negadeh brought the disputed question to a close.

On the site of Abydos, M. Amélineau found, in the centre of a necropolis attributed to the *new race*, large tombs of a very different type, containing stelæ with royal names. Some of these names, deciphered in 1897, certified that these new monuments belonged to the Ist and IId historic dynasties. The same year, M. de Morgan cleared, at Negadeh, a tomb of the same type, which appeared to be that of Menes, the first king on the official lists. The constructors of Abydos and of Negadeh were, then, Pharaohs of the first dynasties; the *new race* people buried near them, of a less advanced civilisation, were their predecessors or their subjects.

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[1] J. de Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l' Égypte*, i, p. 54. 1896. *Cf.* also: *Ethnographie prehistorique et tombeau royal de Negadah*, 1897.

The question of the origins of Egypt may be put to-day in the following terms: a race, called *native* or indigenous, having attained the highest stage of neolithic civilisation, occupied the valley of the Nile; a *foreign* race, more civilised, of unexplained origin, displaced the first and founded around Abydos a kingdom which we call Thinite, to use the term of Manetho again.

The native[1] race which occupied Egypt in prehistoric times, has left traces all along the valley of the Nile; the landmarks of the stone age have been pointed out by M. de Morgan, so that it is possible to draw up a map of neolithic Egypt with its centres of culture: Abû-Roash in the north; Kawamil, Abydos, El-Amrah, Ballas, and Toukh, in the centre of the valley; El-Kâb, Hierakonpolis, and Silsileh, in the south. Dr. Schweinfurth and M. Legrain have discovered important stations in the Arabic and Libyan deserts; the exploration of the oasis of Khargieh, undertaken by M. Legrain, was also very fruitful; these investigations have shown that prehistoric men are traceable by means of the necropolises and the flint-cutter's workshops found in the Nile valley, usually at the opening of the roads of the desert; in the desert itself, along the roads leading to the oases, to the springs, still used to-day as halting-places, are found flints, rough or cut, by the thousands.

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[1] The term, *new race*, which was used to designate this division of the people before one knew their proper place in history, is no longer used.

Flint weapons or implements are, in Egypt as elsewhere, all that has come down to us from this earlier race. Flint, a kind of silica condensed in knots or layers in chalky limestone, is easily separated from the chalk, and forms then a round or elongated mass, from which primitive implements can be fashioned. Sometimes, in the desert, flinty stones split as a result of the action of the sun: thus furnishing, without necessitating any labour, clubs, hatchets, and points with sharp edges.[1] In the majority of cases, however, man aided nature; securing rough flint in order to make weapons of defence or tools to work with, he cut them rudely without attempting to give them an artistic finish. The age in which the first traces of human industry appear to us is that of the "cut stone," or "ancient stone age" (palæolithic age); man existed in this period, which extends back, according to geologists, over several hundred thousand years.

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[1] J. de Morgan, *Recherches sur les origines de l' Égypte*, I, p. 57.

A new era begins when man knows how to cut and polish flint: this is the "polished stone age," or new stone age (neolithic). Man has already made prodigious progress; he is able to work all kinds of materials: wood, bones, ivory, soft or hard stone; he makes crude furniture, vases of stone, vessels of baked or of unbaked clay. The neolithic age did not precede our own age by more than ten or twenty thousand years; we possess the skeletons of men; their graves are equipped with various objects that throw light on their ideas relative to a life beyond the tomb.

These elementary classifications will enable the reader to understand how it has been possible to trace men of the palæolithic and neolithic ages in Egypt. There are no written documents, or inscribed monuments of great size to tell us the story; but a flint pebble picked up on the sand, if one knows how to interpret its flaking or polish, will speak of the past; so does a bone, a fragment of ivory, a bit of rude or decorated pottery, a chip of a stone vase, a ledge of rock bearing graffiti, or a tomb dug out of the sand, containing a skeleton still surrounded with mortuary vases.

The flint workshops are the only vestiges of the most ancient population, that of the palæolithic age: in the sand or on the surface of the desert, are scattered over several miles, thousands of mace-heads, axe-heads, scrapers, or knives of yellow flint, rudely flaked. The inexperienced traveller would mistake them for ordinary stones; the geologist recognises in them the work of the first men. How are these flakes to be dated? It is easy to determine the age of beds of cut flint found in the alluvium of our rivers (such as the Somme and the Oise, in the north of France). At Chelles (near Paris), for instance, flint is dated by the deposit of alluvium in which it lies and by the bones of animals found near it. In Egypt, flints are found in the desert, on the superficial gravel of the diluvium, but no bones are with them; the only clue to their age is that they resemble strongly the Chellean specimens.[1] It is legitimate, therefore, to conclude that they are implements used by the first men who lived in Egypt, but inasmuch as they cannot be identified by means of the Egyptian fauna of the same period, it is rash to attempt to fix the date of their making.[1]

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[1] That is why they are often called, even in Egypt, *Chellean flints.*

At least, it is safe to say that these flakes belong to an earlier age than the weapons and tools of carefully worked and polished stone that are found in the cemeteries of the neolithic period. Since 1890, at the points where the roads of the desert open into the valley of the Nile, Petrie, De Morgan, Quibell, and Amélineau have discovered many tombs with skeletons, tools, and mortuary furnishings, belonging to a race which had already attained an interesting stage of civilisation. We may, by the first historic monuments immediately following this period, fix the end of this neolithic period approximately at 5000 B.C. But how many centuries elapsed before the palæolithic period passed over into the age of cut and polished stone?

Let us consider a typical tomb of the neolithic period: a few feet below the sand, there is an oval ditch, without walls or ceiling, just a pit dug in the shingly ground. A skeleton appears, lying on the left side, in the position called "crouched" or "contracted," the limbs bent, the knees drawn up on a level with the chest, the hands raised to the face. All around the body are the household articles necessary to establish a home, the last dwelling of the deceased: spheric or oval vessels made of pottery or of hard stone, plates, dishes, and cups, wherein funeral offerings were laid. Within reach of the hand are placed flint weapons and tools, amulets and rudely carved jewels; near the face, or sometimes between the hands pressed together, a slate or limestone palette, the religious and artistic importance of which is great. The body shows no trace of mummification as yet; often it was wrapped in the skin of a gazelle fastened together, or in a mat of rushes. "I sometimes found," writes M. de Morgan, "these wrappings in a perfect state of preservation, but they rapidly fell into dust upon contact with the air."

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[1] *Cf*. Salomon Reinach, *L'anthropologie*, 1897, p. 327.

The skeletons are of tall stature, of fine and slender proportions, the skin is white, and the hair smooth and often fair. Judging from the little figures in ivory or earthenware, the men had straight or slightly arched noses, large almond-shaped eyes, oval faces, lengthened still more by a pointed beard and a conical head-dress. An earthen figure, found in Gébel-Tarif, representing a kneeling man with his arms stretched close along the body, and his head with a projecting nose, and chin thrown back, gives us a very realistic image of a man of low estate, in an attitude of prayer or submission, while, on the contrary, a few heads, in ivory, discovered at Hierakonpolis, exemplify the finer, clean-cut faces of chieftains of clans. Here is a dancing woman with raised arms; she is thin at the waist but has broad hips; others are standing, quite naked, in a hieratic attitude. The forms are dainty, in spite of the rudeness of the work; the artist tried to curve the broad hips harmoniously between the long waist and tapering legs. Side by side with these aristocratic beauties, we have the woman of the lower class, who walks, clothed in a garment open at the breast. With her left hand she holds against her shoulder a child, which leans over to grasp the heavy breast. Another figure is that of a servant standing in a jar, in which she is stamping something under her feet: her left hand rests firmly upon her hip, the right hand has a tight grip on the edge of the jar; the whole is expressive, though crude. Elsewhere, we see grotesque dwarfs and Hottentot Venuses of the ultracallipygian type. The ethnographic value of such realistic representations will be seen later.[1]

The human body not only serves as a model for the artist; it is responsible for the beginnings of art. The primitive inhabitants of Egypt, like all savage races, tattooed their bodies: certain statuettes of women, in the Petrie collection, still bear a layer of green paint; the dancing girl of Toukh has her entire body ornamented with zigzag lines composing floral and animal designs, traced in black on a greyish background. That is the reason why there are so often found in prehistoric tombs colouring materials, such as red and yellow ochre and malachite. In the classic period, Egyptians always painted men red, and women yellow; they also maintained the custom of surrounding the eye with a band of paint, which still appears distinctly green on ancient statues, such as those of Sepa and Nesa in the Louvre. This decoration of the human body is to be explained by hygienic reasons and mystic beliefs: the paint for the eyes, consisting chiefly of sulphur of antimony, was applied to prevent ophthalmia; the paintings of talismans and talismanic designs were considered efficacious against bad luck.

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[1] The plates of these figures are in J. Capart's remarkable book: *Les débuts de l'art en Égypte.*

Great care was given to the hair: men divided their hair into many braids, or shaved their heads, leaving uncut only one long lock which hung down their back; sometimes beard and hair were enclosed in bags, possibly for the sake of cleanliness. Women wore wigs and bands of false hair; pins and combs, of bone or ivory, carved with dainty silhouettes of birds or gazelles, fastened the natural or the artificial coiffure; a head-rest was used at night to save this elaborate arrangement that was to last several days. The use of false beards and hanging plaits was not abandoned by the Egyptians of classic times, though they restricted its use to gods and kings; the wearing of wigs, on the other hand, was granted to all classes.

Jewels assured the human body the same protection as paintings and wigs. On the forehead, at the neck, along the breast and hips, at the wrists, ankles, and fingers, the human body either contracts into narrower surfaces, to which talismans may be fastened, or expands into broader surfaces, better able to support some magic armour. At these parts of the body, life is pulsating and almost tangible; it seems as though it might escape, like a rushing liquid, unless some band compresses and imprisons it within the body; hence, the use of bracelets, anklets, necklets, girdles, and breast-pendants. Originally, all these were simple rings of flint, bone, or ivory, used, not merely as adornments, but as means of defence. Later, to increase the magic power of these talismans, figures of birds or Felidæ were engraved or cut on the rings, and combs, and bracelets, in order to protect the person wearing them against these animals; and this use of ornamentation enabled artists to exercise their creative faculty.

Clothing at this period was of a very simple kind. Men and women girded their loins with a cord, the chief purpose of which seems to have been, as in the case of the knots at the neck, wrists, and ankles, to protect the body from accident by magic. The classic Egyptians themselves sometimes wore nothing but a girdle. By attaching an animal's skin to the girdle or the collar the flowing cloak was originated; in the classic period, the panther's skin continued to be the characteristic adornment of certain priests. To these vestments should be added the veils worn by women and possibly by men (as is still to-day the custom among the Touaregs), and the piece of woven fabric occasionally worn round the hips, to which was attached the tail of an animal depending behind.

These flowing garments necessitated the use of hooks or pins; of which there were, indeed, many, made of bone, ivory, and flint. In some rare instances there are found in the tombs *copper* pins, fastening the mat of reeds, or the animal's skin in which the body was wrapped. It is certain that, except for these very small objects, which probably came from a foreign country, the use of metal was unknown to the people of the neolithic age.

Flint and hard stones furnished the raw materials for arms and implements, as in the palæolithic period; but the workmanship is much more elaborate, and the articles manufactured at that time are often marvels of art. We can easily trace the successive steps of the manufacture. Any flint stone found on the sand, or the kidney-shaped concretion formed sometimes within the limestone, furnished man with a conical-shaped piece, ready to be made into an axe-head, a knife, or an arrowhead. The workman thereupon took a round shingle, or a boulder of hard stone to be used as a hammer. With a few hard blows, he shaped out the implement he wanted; then, by successive flaking and chipping he sharpened the edge. This edge, when completed, did not present a smooth surface, but appeared as a series of notches much like the teeth of a saw. The axes, on the other hand, once shaped out, were sharpened with a single blow of the striker, breaking off a fragment all along the edge.[1] The finest workmanship is that of the knives; in no country in the world were found specimens to be compared with these. They are large, semi-circular blades of light yellow, or horny flint, ten to twelve inches long, one end of which is pointed, the other rounded off and serving as a handle. The most ancient specimens are entirely polished; later, when the workmanship had been perfected, flint-chipping became so precise that it resulted in fluted lines, meeting symmetrically on either side of the ridge.

These masterpieces are excelled by the flint bracelets found at Abydos and El-Amrah. Imagine stone rings as perfect in form and as thin as metal rings; it seems impossible that, with their primitive tools, men of the neolithic age should have succeeded in such a difficult operation. M. de Morgan supposes that the workman loosened a spherical nodule from the limestone boss, shaped it into a perfect disk, drilled a conical hole in its centre, by means of a pointed piece of wood, supplemented by quartzite sand used in order to wear away the flint when rubbed against it.

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches* ii, p. 59. *Cf.* G. Schweinfurth, "Recherches sur l'âge de la pierre dans la haute Égypte" (*Annales du Service des Antiquités*, vi, p. 9).

This conical hole was the starting-point of the chipping, by which the ring was hollowed out, and the chips were obtained, not by percussion, for direct blows would inevitably have broken the object, but by pressure, first on one side, then on the other side of the chip. This explanation, although satisfactory, is perhaps not the true one; it shows, however, how many precautions the operator had to take to obtain a flint bracelet. Ornaments of that kind were unquestionably of high value. Flint bracelets mark the acme of the art of flaking and chipping stone, and it is only in Egypt that they are to be met with.[1]

Weapons and tools give us information about the life and customs of the natives. Those nomads of the desert were not a warlike race; at least the corpses found show rarely any traces of wounds; but the struggle against wild beasts, and hunting and fishing required all their activity. Certain graffiti, also figures of animals carved in flint and in ivory, engraved on slate palettes, mounted in pins or combs, bear witness to man's encounters with lions, panthers, hyenas, jackals, gazelles, elephants, hippopotamuses, and all kinds of birds, reptiles and fish. In the same way, tilling and farming implements, sickles, hoes, plough-shares, all made of flint, tell us of the patient work in the fields, of the reed and mud huts in which were housed the cattle and beasts of burden, oxen, moufflons, asses, hogs, sheep, goats, and countless swans, ducks, and pigeons. The wandering tribe that originally settled in the fertile valley of the Nile thus developed gradually into the prehistoric people whom we see combining with hunting and fishing the more difficult art of improving a land which was subject to the caprices of the floods

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, ii, p. 60.

The weapons, jewels, and little figures of animals that are found in the tombs were not put there as precious knick-knacks or familiar objects, from which the deceased did not wish to part. Their purpose was higher; in Egypt, as elsewhere, they were the expression of a system of ideas, already formed, about life beyond the tomb. No man believes more firmly than the primitive in the survival, after death, of that indefinable something that we call the soul; this survival was supposed to be a repetition of the material life, of course better than the earthly one, but subject to the same wants, requiring the same weapons as a protection against dangers and the same implements for transmundane labours. Therefore, the dead man had within reach his arms and tools; near him, figures of domestic animals assured him of a supply of meat; little figures of wild beasts neutralised the harm of the real wild beasts that might attack him in his tomb: these likenesses being subjected to his will, gave him mastery, as it were, over lions and hippopotamuses. Such was his faith in magic.

Likewise, the vases, the first models of an art that has scarcely advanced since, either as respects their shape or the process of making them, have a religious significance. In them were placed the offerings. The bestowal of offerings is an essential element of the earliest known religion: the funeral cult. At that time, vases answered all the different needs of life. They constituted the furnishings, *par excellence:* the deceased, laid among his vases, reposed as if in his own comfortable house. Liquid and solid food, seeds, provisions of all kinds, clothing, sometimes even the corpses themselves were deposited in these vases, of all shapes and dimensions, and suitable, therefore, for various purposes.

The vases of hard stone, found by the thousands in the tombs, astounded archæologists. No one expected to find among a people provided with such rudimentary tools, cups, plates, goblets, dainty or massive vessels, cut out of sandstone, granite, marble, diorite, obsidian, crystal, or alabaster. The materials used by the prehistoric people for their table and toilet were sumptuous enough to fill one with wonder. The valley of the Nile has none of the igneous formations that produce these hard stones, except at the first cataract, between Assouan and the Red Sea. The places of extraction were there; but certain blocks came from Sinai; others, such as obsidian, had to be brought from Asia or even from the Greek islands. We are then obliged to admit that an active interchange of trade united, from the remotest times, the Nile valley and the eastern Mediterranean countries.

It was thought at first that the artists who manufactured those splendid table services used tools of a much higher grade, or at least wheels. A minute examination of the proportions and a scrutiny of the fragments, which threw light on the workmanship of the vases both inside and out, caused M. de Morgan to change his opinion on this subject:

> A careful study of the rock-crystal vases makes it easy—thanks to the transparency of this material—to understand the means employed by the craftsman. The shape of the outside was given by rotating the

block between two pieces of wood strewn with quartzite sand; to hollow out the interior, the craftsman made a hole in the centre by means of a stick and sand; then, to enlarge the cavity below the neck of the vase, he used coarse quartzite sand that he stirred around inside the vase with a simple wooden stick. The two processes were produced separately, as is proved by the unequal thickness resulting from the fact that the axial lines outside and inside do not correspond.[1]

Many centuries later, the bas-reliefs of the tombs of the VIth dynasty (for instance that of Mera at Sakkarah) show us workmen drilling vases by the same process. Thus this splendid crockery was patiently fashioned out of hard stone by friction and wearing away; can we truly realise the persevering labour necessary to shape such brittle or hard material as crystal and diorite? Many of the vases exhibited to-day in Cairo, London, and in the Musée Guimet represent the work of a lifetime!

The forms are so varied that they could have been produced only by patience combined with extraordinary technical skill. Here are a bowl and a cup, simple in outline indeed, but of pronounced beauty; another type is the cylindrical vase, generally of alabaster, decorated with a large border and a little cord pattern below the mouth; finally there are the globular vases, the most remarkable of all. But aside from these shapes, which were to become classic, how many other models and unexpected forms of baffling originality! Certain vases are shaped like a skin bottle, a gourd, a goose, a frog, a dog, a hippopotamus, an elephant. One of the oddest is in the Petrie collection (University College, London): "On the body of this vase are carved in relief two heads. The mouth is indicated by a strong horizontal stroke, and the eyes by two beads inserted in a hollow of the stone."[1] No words can express the wretched and diabolical expression of this face which emerges somewhat indistinctly from the bowl of the vase; the stare of the round eyes pierces like a gimlet, the twisted mouth sneers pitilessly; the vase seems haunted; therein a fallen soul has long been weeping! (Plate V, 3.)

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, ii, p. 179 and i, p. 165.

Earthenware vessels, infinitely easier to manufacture, are more numerous than those in hard stone; they are found in all the tombs, those of poor and rich alike, from neolithic times to the Memphite dynasties. Messrs. de Morgan and Petrie, by studying the material of which they are made, their forms, and the process of making them, have been able to establish chronological divisions: if ceramic types can be classified by localities and by periods, the tombs, in which these successive types are found, can also be dated, relatively to one another.

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[1] J. Capart, *Les débuts de l'art en Égypte*, p. 77 *ff*.

Prehistoric pottery is red or yellow, smooth or rough, without any decoration, or with patterns painted or engraved. The colour depends especially upon the raw material: sedimentary clay, or mud from the Nile. Clay becomes, when baked, a vivid red; mud of the Nile, yellowish or reddish, according to the intensity of the heat applied to it in baking. It seems that the most ancient types made of clay must be the smooth, red vases, decorated, on the upper edge, with a broad band of black varnish, obtained by mixing in the paste colouring substances (bioxides of Sinai manganese.)[1] Then would follow chronologically the rough red vases, then the reddish or yellowish fancy pottery, variously decorated.[2]

The choice of decoration and of shapes does credit to the fancy and skill of the potters. The most ancient vases were cups, bowls, and plates with the tops rounded or turned over; later appeared cylinders, bottles, and amphoras. The bottom was made flat or pointed when the vase was to be laid or pitched in the sand; handles appeared only later; certain workshops, like that of El-Amrah, decorated the jar, below the neck, with a wavy line, at first broken, then encircling it like a continuous collar. During the period of highest attainment, spherical vases appeared; sometimes there were double jars or three joined together, with or without interior communication. There were also vases with trivets, pitchers with a strainer to filter water, a type still in use, as witness the jugs of Keneh. These were the shapes of the hard-stone vessels; it seems likely that the art of the potter preceded that of the stone polisher; yet, the designs that appear on some pieces of earthenware pottery were made in imitation of those on the hard-stone vases; this proves that the two artistic series became at an early date contemporaries, and were developed side by side.

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, i, p. 152.

[2] See Petrie, *Diospolis parva*, Pl. I. Musée Guimet has a fine collection of prehistoric vases, especially of the most ancient type (with blackened top) and of the types found, by M. Amélineau in the workshop of El-Amrah.

The process of making pottery is simple and is dependent entirely on the trained eye and the skilled hand. The forms were of very nearly perfect regularity, yet want of symmetry in the layers and in the thickness may be detected here and there, showing unmistakably that this pottery was shaped by hand. Certain vases, in the form of amphoræ, were decorated from top to bottom with furrows made before the baking by indenting with the finger. Later, the addition of carving and painting produced a more elaborate decoration. On red vases, geometrical designs, painted in white lines, reproduced plaiting-work and patterns of baskets dating from the beginnings of the neolithic civilisation. At the same period appeared black vases, incised with geometrical patterns, and filled with a whitish substance; "it has been stated that they were imported into Egypt from an unknown manufacturing centre, the productions of which are to be met with in all Mediterranean countries."[1]

The increasing skill of the craftsmen made possible a greater variety of types. The animal-shaped pottery (Plate V, 5), including representations of fishes, ducks, hawks, and hippopotamuses,[2] composed table-services of an amusing or hideous aspect, similar to the brass-wares and French *dinanderie* of the Middle Ages. Attempts were also made to reproduce the human face: a very ancient amphora, preserved in Oxford, shows

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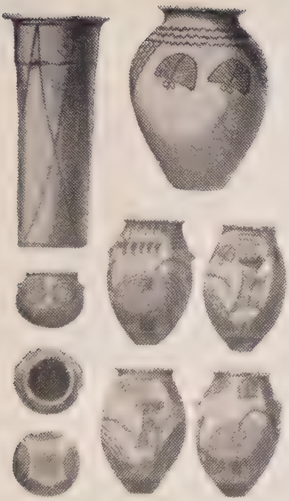
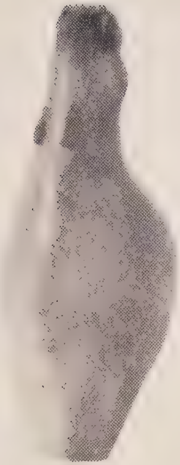
[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, ii, p. 122.

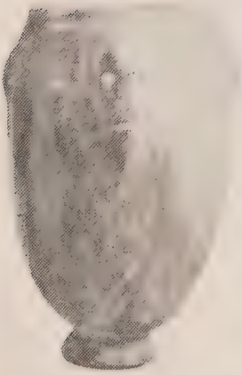
[2] J. Capart, *Les débuts de l'art en Égypte*, p. 126.

I.

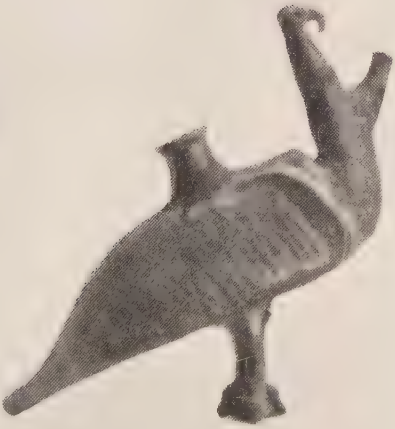


II.





III.



IV.

I. Prehistoric Ceramics. (Cliché of Morgan.)
II. Woman-shaped Vase. (J. Capart: *Débuts de l'art en Egypte.*)
III. Vase with Human Face.
IV. Bird-shaped Vase. (J. Capart: *Débuts de l'art en Egypte.*)

Plate V.

crouching captives (?) encircling with their arms the bowl of the vase, from which protrude their woebegone faces, carved in relief. In the same Museum (Ashmoleum), there is a large vase with a brilliant black covering, which is an instance of an attempt to model the feminine form. The mouth of the vase represents the face; a pinching of the clay indicates the nose, the ears, and the hair; the neck of the vase forms the bust and thin waist, and on it are represented, too, the round shoulders and drooping breasts, of succinct modelling; then, the bowl bulges out abruptly, in imitation of the fatty development of the Hottentot Venus.[1] (Plate V, 2.)

The decoration of the most remarkable vases of the prehistoric period give us an idea of the views entertained by these people of the life beyond the grave. Even the rough jars show, by their contents, now dried up, including water, flour, seeds, oil, wine, and meat, that offerings ensured the nourishment of the deceased. Again, to secure for him a second existence, resembling exactly the first, the essential episodes of this life had to be represented in the house of the dead, that is, the tomb: according to a well-known principle of primitive magic, like produces like; to represent a scene of life is, therefore, to make it happen again. It is this idea which gave rise to the practice of decorating the tomb, a custom responsible for practically all Egyptian art.

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[1] J. Capart, *Les débuts de l'art en Egypte*, p. 124.

A difficulty arose when it was necessary to decorate with figures and pictures just such a tomb as we have described above: a simple pit in the sand, without floor, walls, or ceiling. One attempted to overcome it by placing in the tomb the usual objects, weapons, jewels, tools, when they were of small size; people and beasts, necessary for the pleasure or the service of the deceased, were represented by small figures. But this did not meet all the requirements of the dead: these separate elements had to be grouped together so as to reconstitute scenes from life, the perpetuation of which was desired in the life to come: hence the invention of decorative pictures, in which each figure played the rôle of an ideogram, and expressed a particular moment of existence, promised to the dweller of the tomb. Women with raised arms symbolised dancing and public festivals; a gazelle or an ostrich recalled the pleasures of the hunt; a barge, navigation on the Nile; trees and flowers gave, in miniature, some landscape of the cultivated valley; a series of rough triangles represented the ranges of desert uplands over which the nomads were wandering; huts, with a signal on the top, designated the house or the village of the deceased with the ensign of his clan.

After choosing their decorative designs, the artists seem to have been uncertain as to the best way of presenting them. For instance, there is a statuette of a woman of Toukh on whose breast, back, and hips are depicted streams of water, mountains, and animals. This was, indeed, a unique way of representing a statue surrounded by active life in the midst of nature; but such rudimentary devices were later improved upon. The idea was seized upon of decorating pottery with scenic representations painted red on a light background: the corpse, surrounded by vases, as though by the four walls of his house, could contemplate, on the sides of these vases, the scenes he desired to have happen in his life beyond the tomb. Later, when brick was invented and when the art of construction had been perfected, the walls were made use of by decorators. A prehistoric tomb, discovered by M. Green at Hierakonpolis, bears in red, upon a limestone coated background, the same scenes of dancing, hunting, and navigation as those decorating the vases made by the potters of Abydos or Negadeh.[1]

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[1] Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, ii, Pl. 75–79.

These diminutive pictures, which retrace a few aspects of social life, fifty or sixty centuries ago, have aroused the curiosity of the archæologists. They are far from agreeing upon the precise signification of the episodes: one design, especially, has called forth the most diverse interpretations. It presents what appears to be two huts, often connected by a door, and encircled by a double line curving inward in the form of a boat; vertical or slanting lines, like a compact row of oars, extend from one end of the ship to the other. Trees, gazelles, ostriches, and human silhouettes, scattered capriciously over the whole, increase the enigmatic aspect of the composition. Messrs. Petrie and de Morgan—whose opinion is still shared by the majority of scholars—think the objects represented are boats furnished with oars and cabins; Cecil Torr and M. Loret[1] are of the opinion that in this case is depicted a village with a fortified gate, protected by a semicircular entrenchment, itself fortified by a palisade. The variants furnished by the tomb of Hierakonpolis, the graffiti of El-Kab, and certain vases, mentioned by M. von Bissing, lead me to the conclusion that such figures represent boats, with or without rowers. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that, already in this period, a boat may have symbolised the human habitation in the Nile valley; in historic times, we see that the naos of the gods and of the dead is placed preferably in the cabin of a barge; the ark was the ideal, moveable house, always within reach of the water, that primordial element of African civilisation.

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[1] *Revue Égyptologique*, x, p. 87 *ff*.

Be they barges, or villages, the objects above mentioned are decorated with high staffs bearing an ensign: sometimes it is an animal, a hawk, an elephant, a scorpion, a fish; sometimes, a feather, a bucrane, a double arrow, a harpoon; there are about thirty different ensigns in all. M. Loret has very cleverly identified them as the ensigns of the clans of the prehistoric race, of which a part survived in the classic time as "armorial bearings" of the Egyptian cities. It is possible that those ensigns were at the same time gods, or totems, incarnating the souls of all the men belonging to the clan.

The figures, decorating the vases, are interesting from another point of view: they throw light on the disputed question of the writing in that period. The prehistoric people seem not to have known the Egyptian graphic system, which implies alphabetic or syllabic characters, used along with ideographic signs. There is no doubt, however, that the hieroglyphic writing of later times retained a large number of signs which appear on vases; animals and plants, peculiar to the Egyptian country, helped to give a real African stamp to the Pharaonic writing. I am inclined to believe that the prehistoric people, though they had not yet mastered the art of writing, could express themselves by the aid of rebuses, arranged in some vague system, and that the paintings on the vases could be read *grosso modo* about like a charade in pictures (Pl. V, 1).

Besides, the vases of that period bear a series of "trademarks" which assume exactly the appearance of alphabetic signs. It was a great surprise to identify these signs with those found on the vases of the Crete-Ægean cemeteries and with the primitive alphabets of Caria and Spain, also with Libyan signs. These marks, moreover, to all appearances do not form an alphabet, and are never grouped according to a regular system, so as to express fully developed ideas. Nevertheless, it does seem certain that "there was all along the Mediterranean, from prehistoric times, some system of writing, or, at least, of marks, that was in common use."[1] What people brought into Egypt this compendious graphic system?

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[1] J. Capart, *Les origines de l'art en Égypte*, p. 142.

The reply to this question is involved in the solution of another problem: what is the probable origin of the prehistoric race settled in Egypt? According to Doctor Fouquet, the cephalic indication of the skulls, found in the most ancient tombs, brings the race of Negadeh into close relationship with the Hottentots and Kaffirs; the type of Beit-Allam would be akin to that of the populations of North India, and the Kawamil type would bear analogy with the Libyan element. This chequered statement is less disconcerting than it appears to be at first sight. The influence of a Berber-Libyan race is attested by the decorated pottery (which exhibits types of vases still in use to-day among the Kabyls), by the use of certain implements, such as flint ploughshares, and by the arrangement of stones in a circle, for forming dolmens.[1] Besides, the Egyptian language shows traces of Berber dialects. As for the steatopygous statuettes, they indicate the presence of a group of Hottentot origin in the neolithic race; the black vases with white decoration bear witness to relations with Asia and the islands. In short, the prehistoric race seems to be a pretty mixture. One fact is sure: these variegated elements were rather quickly amalgamated, after the invasion of a conquering population, by which they became gradually absorbed.

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, i, p. 239.

While Messrs. Petrie and de Morgan were disinterring the prehistoric race, M. Amélineau was discovering at Abydos dated tombs, by the aid of which the age of the monuments without inscriptions could be determined.

It was in November, 1895, that M. Amélineau began his excavations on the site of Abydos[1] with the approval of the Service des Antiquités. The result was not encouraging until his diggers reached, at the entrance of a gorge leading to the Libyan desert, the necropolis called Om-el-Gaab. The name is picturesque and means "the mother of vases." Five mounds were there, covered with a great quantity of very coarse red pottery, and fragments of hard-stone vases, the interest of which, in 1895, was hardly known.

The first three mounds yielded two hundred small tombs, dug deep in the subsoil, and walled up with brick; the skeletons were laid on their sides, in a contracted posture. M. Amélineau, who had at first neglected these tombs, heard from Messrs. Petrie and de Morgan that similar sepulchres had been found in Negadeh, and that these were thought to date from very remote times; so he began, in March, 1896, special excavations at El-Amrah, where one of the most important prehistoric cemeteries came to light. Beside the small tombs appeared two large brick tombs, twenty-seven feet by fifteen; one of the fragments of alabaster and hard-stone vases found there bore a hawk perched on a rectangle. This figure indicated the presence of a royal name, but unfortunately a crack had separated it from the hieroglyphics. Around the fourth mound, there were many small brick tombs, the most beautiful of which were floored with boards, fastened to one another by copper wires. An immense archaic necropolis was there: the principal monuments, surrounded by a number of smaller tombs, were to be found in the centre.

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[1] E. Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos*, three brochures in 8vo and five volumes in 4to.

Some days after, M. Amélineau discovered a structure forty-six feet long, twenty-four feet wide, and eighteen feet high. The brick walls were over twelve feet thick; a stairway of forty-two steps led down to the interior, which was paved with pink granite. On a granite mortar and on clay stoppers was read the name of the king, Den, the first archaic king thus brought to light after thousands of years. Not far away, a second tomb, with a wooden flooring from which rose pillars at intervals, revealed, on a granite stela, the name of the king Qa. Parallel with this was the tomb, made of brick and wood, of King Mersekh; finally, there appeared a fourth structure composed of a central room and little cells, full of vases and stelæ, bearing the names of individuals; in the centre stood a splendid limestone stela, which, though it had been broken into three pieces, had preserved unmutilated the name of the king: a large serpent, which we read as Zet.[1]

In short, M. Amélineau's investigations during 1895–96 resulted in the discovery of the four tombs of the kings Den, Qa, Mersekh, and Zet; but on the fragments of vases, collected here and there, twelve other royal names appeared, among which were those of Aha, Narmer, and Merbapen, names unknown until then. These M. Amélineau could not make out but they were deciphered and identified two years after the discovery.

"And now, to what period must these curious monuments be assigned?" said M. Amélineau before the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, at the meeting of May 29, 1896. After having established the fact that the objects discovered were of a very archaic type, he continued:

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[1] This stela offered for sale, a few years ago, was acquired by the Louvre, after lively competition with Berlin, for the price of 100,000 francs.

> Our impulse would be to attribute them to the first dynasties. . . . But the first two dynasties do not present a single name resembling the sixteen that we possess; . . . consequently we are led back to an epoch that preceded the first two dynasties. Manetho mentions, previously to the Ist dynasty, the Nekyes, who reigned over Egypt, and also demi-gods. These "Dead" or these "Shades" are perhaps not divine dynasties, as has been believed, but rather the kings whose names I found in the tombs I explored at Abydos.[1]

It is obvious to what this argumentation leads. According to a tradition recorded on the royal papyrus of Turin, and confirmed by Manetho and Diodorus, the Pharaohs were preceded by gods, demi-gods, and "Shades." Does the legend conceal some historic fact? Did the would-be gods, demi-gods, and "Shades" really exist, as Diodorus states, under the form of men whom their successors, through piety or to exalt their dynasty, promoted to the rank of gods? M. Maspero rejected this theory.

> I am convinced [he declared] that there exist monuments erected before the time of Menes [the first king of Egypt, according to Manetho and the

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[1] Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos*, 1896, in 8vo, p. 23.

Pharaonic lists]. . . . Yet before admitting that the discoveries of M. Amélineau belong to this category, I should like him to furnish some proof, even just one tangible piece of evidence, that it is impossible to attribute them either to the first three dynasties, or to the VIIth, VIIIth, IXth, and Xth dynasties *when the majority of the kings are still deprived of their Horus names.*

M. Amélineau had, indeed, not considered this hypothesis: perhaps the names discovered were mere duplicates of those given by the royal lists; it might be admitted that the Pharaohs bore from the archaic period a "Horus name" different from the "royal name."[1] Thus might be explained the fact that the names found at Abydos are not found on the official lists: the latter give the "royal names," while the monuments had furnished, up to this time, only the "Horus names." We know to-day that this hypothesis was justified. We have ascertained the use of two names for the same Pharaoh (in the case of many kings) by examining the fragments of vases, found by M. Amélineau himself or by others, and we have been able to bring into accord the testimony of the lists and of Manetho and that given by the monuments.

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[1] The "Horus name" of the Pharaohs is inscribed in a rectangle decorated at its base with the diagram of a simple or double door, representing the plan of the palace where resides the corporal soul, the Double or Génie of the king, *i.e.*, the tomb. That is why this name is also called the name of the Double. On the rectangle is perched a hawk, symbolic of the god Horus with whom the king is identified; whence the expression "Horus name." As to the "royal name," generally differing from the "Horus name," it is preceded by the reed and the bee, or by the vulture and the uræus; in classic times, it is inscribed in an oval cartouche.

But, in 1896, M. Amélineau persisted in his opinion on this point; though Manetho points out that the kings of the first two dynasties were from Thinis, the scholar who had discovered their tombs did not wish to admit that they contained the remains of the earliest Pharaohs. Hence the preconceived ideas which guided the investigator in his excavations of 1897–99 and in the interpretation of their results.

The campaign of 1896–97, waged around the fourth mound, yielded an immense tomb, 244 feet long divided into sixty-five rooms abundantly provided with funeral furnishings. The royal name stamped upon jar-stoppers presented a new peculiarity: instead of the hawk, Horus, there were, facing or following each other, a hawk and a greyhound. Inside the tomb was a name, which at first seemed to read Ti, but of which M. Maspero gave the correct reading later: Khasekhemui. M. Amélineau believed that the two animals stood for a double name and consequently that two kings were alluded to. This tomb seemed to him still earlier than the preceding four; these two kings, then, ought, according to this reasoning, to belong to the dynasty of the gods that preceded the dynasty of the "Shades."

Nevertheless, he was very much disappointed: he thought he had found the tomb of the most popular of those kingly gods, *i.e.*, Osiris, the later patron of Abydos, "and now the inscriptions mentioned two gods, notwithstanding the fact that in order that his hope might be realised, only one god could be provided for."

The following year (1897–98), the fourth mound being cleared in its turn yielded a quantity of débris, of recent times, with dedications to Osiris: was he then approaching the famous tomb of Osiris which tradition located at Abydos? Three conditions, according to M. Amélineau, would have to be fulfilled before the monument could be identified with the tomb of Osiris: tradition mentioned in the first place numerous tombs or stelæ erected all around it; then a stairway, equally famous, leading to the coffin; finally, an illustrious relic, the head of Osiris, that was to be found there in a shrine. What was found in fact, in January, 1898, was, in the midst of numerous tombs, a brick structure, thirty-six feet by thirty-six to which a stairway led. It was full of enormous jars; near the south wall was a funeral bed of granite, five and a half feet long, on which was lying Osiris, draped in his shroud, mitred, and holding in his hand a sceptre and a whip. Near the right shoulder could be read his name: "Osiris, the good being, with the creative voice." At his head and at his feet, four hawks kept watch: the gods "Horus who protect their father"; a fifth bird, Isis (Osiris's wife), rested upon the body of her husband. All around the bed was an inscription reading "Osiris Khontamenti, the lord of Abydos." The name of the donor king was found hammered out and is still illegible, but the arrangement of the royal protocol and the style of the monument do not warrant us in dating it earlier than the first Theban Empire (about 2000 B.C.), and it may be much more recent.

But M. Amélineau did not doubt that this was Osiris's tomb, and he still refers to this monument by that name: of course, as he said, the funeral bed was not of true ancient style, but a later king might have renewed the original cenotaph. To clinch the argument, the fragment of only one skeleton was found, a skull, which "must have been the skull of Osiris."

This later proof seemed decisive in identifying the tomb of the god-king. It carried with it the consequence that the monument, discovered in the preceding year, which mentioned two gods, must have belonged to Osiris's successors, his brother Set, who put him to death, and his son Horus, who avenged him. The royal name, preceded by the greyhound of Set and the hawk of Horus, represented Set and Horus reconciled and sharing Egypt, a statement in accordance with the traditions relating to the divine dynasties. Thus was established the theory that "caused the divine dynasties to enter abruptly into history."

To-day this theory has no longer any supporters. It is admitted that the funeral bed is a commemorative monument, of recent style, renewing perhaps a more ancient cenotaph. As early as 1898, M. Maspero suggested that the place where Osiris lay "might have been originally the tomb of some sovereign of the Thinite dynasties." The jars found there are, indeed, stamped with the name of a new Horus: the King Zer, who was the real owner of the tomb, which became later the seat of an Osirian chapel. As for the "skull of Osiris," it was proved, on examination by a specialist, "not to be the skull of a man." The double title indicated by the hawk and the greyhound, which represented, according to M. Amélineau, "Horus and Set," certainly has an historic explanation. It was one of the developed names assumed by the Pharaoh, as successor of the divine dynasties. Formerly, Horus and Set had divided Egypt among themselves; Pharaoh thus reigned over the two halves of the country and bore the names of his two divine ancestors. Sometimes the queens received the following name, which explains the whole allegory: "she who sees her Horus and her Set," that is to say, the king who has succeeded them. For historians, Osiris's tomb is only Zer's tomb; the tomb of "Horus and Set" that of the King Khasekhemui. The monuments brought to light by M. Amélineau have lost nothing of their great interest; on the contrary, they have acquired a new dignity in passing from the world of fable into the world of reality.

Historic ground was finally struck upon by M. Amélineau himself, in his last excavations. An edifice was found divided into chambers, that had still their ceilings of rafters, and stone and copper vases, stelæ, and jar-stoppers. The name stamped on them was that of the King Perabsen, whose name had previously been found on a stela preserved at Cairo, where it appears side by side with that of King Sondou, whom the lists place in the IId human dynasty. The fifth mound of

Om-el-Gaab yielded nothing of importance, but the discovery of Perabsen's monument left no doubt as to what interpretation should be given to the monuments unearthed by M. Amélineau's excavations: the kings buried at Abydos ought to be identified with the Pharaohs of the Thinite dynasties.

A confirmation of these results was obtained about the same time in other parts of Egypt. M. de Morgan had been much interested in the excavations at Abydos, because they are the link between the documents of the neolithic age and the historic period, and he was the first to publish the royal names found by M. Amélineau. He himself cleared, in March, 1897, near the neolithic stations of Ballas and Toukh, between Abydos and Thebes, the remains of a monument that seemed to him contemporary with the Abydos edifices. It was a rectangle, 163 feet long by 81 feet wide, carefully built, containing a central room, in which were found the fragments of a calcinated skeleton; and sixteen adjoining rooms, full of vases and objects of all kinds, the enumeration of which required over four pages in his report. All these were found on the floor of the rooms, under a thick bed of ashes; the entire tomb has been, like several tombs at Abydos, set on fire, and such was the heat that it vitrified vases of granite, porphyry, and clay, and calcinated brick walls sixteen inches thick. The jars, in which had been placed food and other objects, were stamped with the name of King Aha, already known from fragments found at Abydos. These discoveries, by which the field of ancient history was so enlarged, were discussed in the meeting of the Congress of Orientalists in Paris, September, 1897. One of the younger Egyptologists of Germany, Kurt Sethe (to-day a professor at Göttingen), announced on that occasion that he had been able to decipher on the fragments of vases published by M. Amélineau, the "royal names" of three kings of the Ist dynasty, such as are given by the Pharaonic lists; until then, these names, corresponding to "Miebaïs, Ousaphaïs and Semempses," mentioned by Manetho, had escaped Egyptologists, because they were disguised in archaic writing. A few weeks later, M. Maspero proposed the identification of Menes with a hieroglyphic sign Men, preceded by royal titles, and placed next to the Horus name Aha, on an ivory plate covered with enigmatic figures.[1]

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[1] This plate was found broken into pieces, and about one third of it was missing. In 1905, M. Garstang, returning to the site of Negadeh and passing through a sieve all the earth removed, fortunately found the missing fragment of the plate.

At the same time, M. Borchardt was giving the same reading before the Berlin Academy (November 25, 1897). This identification has not been accepted by all Egyptologists, for technical reasons too long to be explained here. As the cartouche of Aha appeared at Abydos, it was assumed that the kings of Abydos were the successors of the king of Negadeh, Aha-Menes, a conclusion which is supported by the identifications established by M. Sethe. At any rate, by the end of 1897, Messrs. Amélineau and de Morgan had found, at least, four kings of the Ist dynasty (Manetho gives eight), and perhaps the fabulous Menes, the first of the Pharaohs.

These unhoped-for results were completed by the excavations of M. Quibell on one of the most ancient sites known in Egypt: Hierakonpolis, the city of Hawks, half-way between Thebes and Elephantine.[1] Under the ruins of a shrine of the XIIth dynasty, there appeared a group of five small brick rooms, where lay a large quantity of votive offerings, belonging to the period of the first dynasties; most of them bore the name of a King Narmer, already discovered on fragments from Abydos. The names of the so-called kings, Horus-Set and Khasekhemui, adorned splendid granite door-jambs; two statues bore the cartouche of a new king, Khasekhem; other objects belonged to different periods, down to the VIth dynasty. The collection was of exceptional beauty, being probably a series of choice pieces, deposited as "ex-voto" in the temple.

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[1] Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, i, 1901; ii, 1902.

The number of royal names kept on increasing. M. Petrie added to it when he undertook excavations at Abydos (1899–1900), on the very site worked over and then abandoned by M. Amélineau. All the earth cleared was passed through a sieve, the structures were re-examined, the mounds searched again with painstaking care. Two new structures appeared; in one lay a large stela, on which was inscribed the name of a queen Merit-Neit, probably the wife of Aha; the other seems to have belonged to the king Anz-âb. But M. Petrie's chief acquisitions were jar-stoppers, ivory plates, and fragments of vases bearing royal names, not collected by his predecessor. The legends engraved on these documents indicated that the "Horus names" Den, Anz-âb, and Mersekh belonged to the same personages as the "royal names" already identified by M. Sethe: those of Miebaïs, Ousaphaïs, Semempses.[1] These six names, then, are borne by only three Pharaohs. On the other hand, many Horus names, unknown until then, appeared at the same time, so that, after having deplored the absolute dearth of documents about the first dynasties, Egyptologists now are overwhelmed and perplexed by the abundance of royal names, which outnumber those furnished by the lists of the classic period.[1] What conclusion shall we draw? This seems the most plausible: that the scribes who drew up the historical lists either did not know all the names we have found, or else made a selection among them, without telling us the reasons for their choice.

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[1] Fl. Petrie, *The Royal Tombs at Abydos*, i, 1899; ii, 1901; *Abydos*, i–iii, 1902–5.

Since 1900, this rush of discoveries has subsided into a slow but regular advance. Few are the names that have since then been brought to light, but new finds can always be expected. At any rate another misconception has been dispelled: it can no longer be maintained that the kings of the first dynasties were confined to a few restricted sections of Egypt. The excavations or researches of Messrs. Maspero and Barsanti have established the fact that the sites of Memphis and Sakkarah were occupied by the Thinite kings; the researches of M. Weill have proved the existence of monuments of King Mersekh in the mines of Sinai, the working of which dates back to the first dynasty. The whole of Egypt, therefore, was once under Thinite rule.

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[1] Professor Petrie proposed to begin with a dynasty called 0 (zero) to embrace these additional kings, many of which seem to have lived before Menes.

Thinite civilisation differs fundamentally from the culture of the neolithic age, in that it acquired a few new elements of the utmost importance: the use of metal, the art of building, the knowledge of writing. The indigenous population could not have contributed the elements of so considerable a progress; its potters and carvers did not become the smiths and masons of Abydos and Negadeh. We are forced to the conclusion that some invasion brought into Egypt a new race: the Egyptians of the historic period.

Whence came these invaders? We can rest assured that their language was completely formed; it is written by means of signs that we call hieroglyphics, which, while reproducing the shape of a particular object, or being, are rarely ideographic. The writing is no longer in that primitive stage where the word "lion" was represented, in the manner of the neolithics, by drawing a "lion"; it has reached that higher stage when this lion represents merely a sound, a letter, or a syllable. Now, the Egyptian language, in its essential roots and in its elementary grammatical forms, the pronouns for example, is a branch of the Semitic trunk. This is a potent argument in favour of the Asiatic origin of the invaders.

The style of the monuments confirms this hypothesis. The use of bricks, even in the vicinity of the quarries of the desert, where beautiful stones are plentiful, points to the conclusion that these newcomers came from Chaldea. At Negadeh, the enclosing wall, erected by Aha, presents a façade adorned with prismatic grooves, forming a regular series of projections and recesses. The same arrangement is carried out in all the royal palaces; the rectangular cartouche in which the Horus name is written, and which forms the plan of a palace always has this decoration, later applied also to the tombs erected by the kings, their relatives and courtiers. M. de Morgan has pointed out the striking similarity between this method of construction and certain very ancient schemes in lower Chaldea. The cylinder that was used to stamp the royal names upon the clay vases bears witness also of Chaldean influence; it was destined to go out of use in Egypt quickly and only in rare instances was it resorted to after the Thinite period; this foreign fashion was short-lived in the valley of the Nile. Again, it is surprising to see on several palettes, fantastic animals with unusually long necks, the like of which, according to M. Heuzey's researches, are not to be met with except on Chaldean cylinders. Finally, the use of copper and of bronze is attested by numerous knives, pins, nails, bodkins, and spear-heads; gold was beaten into foils and chiselled; iron was known in its hematite form; with the exception of gold, all these metals came from Asia and Sinai. The elements of civilisation that were to renovate the material and intellectual conditions of the neolithic, indigenous population were then, to all appearances, brought from a cultural centre already highly developed, at a time when the inhabitants of the Nile valley still had a rudimentary set of ideas and primitive implements.[1]

The Asiatic smiths seem to have entered Egypt, not by the Isthmus of Suez, but by crossing the Red Sea; perhaps they reached the Nile by going along the Ouady-Hammamat, from Qoceir to Coptos. Thus might be explained the presence of very archaic statues at Coptos, which are, perhaps, the first monuments of the new race. It is conceded that Arabia and perhaps also the country of Pount (the coast of Erythræa and Somalis) served as way stations, where the migrating peoples,[1] on their way from Chaldea into Egypt, lingered for indefinite periods. They reached Egypt by the centre of the valley, and the first settlements of the invaders are found, indeed, at the terminus-point of their route, on the other side of the river, at Abydos and Negadeh. The indigenous race fought stubbornly against the newcomers; it is this race, it seems, that the first monuments of the invaders, bearing figures and inscriptions, designate by the name of Temhou and of Anou, names which, in the later historic period, we find applied to the Nubians and Libyans. The natives were driven back, some to the south as far as Nubia, some to the north, into the Delta; they appear on the votive palettes; bound and tied up by the victorious Hawk; trampled by the royal Bull; knocked down or beheaded, according to the ritual, by the Pharaoh; the Palermo stone, which has preserved the list of the festivals in the Thinite and Memphite period, mentions as a special commemoration the day "of striking the Anou."[1]

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[1] De Morgan, *Recherches*, i, p. 199.

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[1] In the historic period the only foreign people whom the Egyptians recognised as bearing some resemblance to themselves in features and colour, and with whom they never waged war, was the people inhabiting the country of Pount, "the land of the gods," whence Horus and Hâthor were probably derived. *Cf.* V. Loret: *Horus le Faucon.*

The overthrow of the natives is attributable in part possibly to the number of their opponents but more especially to the superior equipment of the invaders. These newcomers, formidable on account of the copper, bronze, or iron heads of their spears, arrows, and axes, gave evidence of a material and moral superiority that has left a curious trace in history. The texts and bas-reliefs of the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu relate at length the wars waged, under the divine dynasties, by Horus, the hawk-god, at the time when he conquered Egypt. The "followers of Horus" are soldiers armed with javelins and bodkins, and they are designated as "smiths"; the places where they reside are called "smithies." Perhaps, the legend of Horus conquering Egypt at the head of the "smiths" is only the distant echo of a primitive historical fact: "something like the arrival of the Spaniards among the peoples of the New World, or the invasion of Egypt by tribes knowing and making use of iron, having among them a caste of smiths, and worshipping a warlike god."[2]

These "followers of Horus" seem, indeed, to have been the first of the new race to arrive; the pyramid texts allude to them as ancestors, who, though belonging to a dim past, have not yet gone out of the memory of men. They founded a capital at Hierakonpolis, in the centre of Upper Egypt, and another at Buto, in the heart of the Delta; from that time, the valley was divided into the White Kingdom of the South and the Red Kingdom of the North. The two subdivisions of Egypt did not live in peace; Hierakonpolis, the monuments of which M. Quibell has discovered, subdued Buto. The episodes of these wars are found engraved on the maces of King Narmer; the unfortunate Northerners appear also, on the pedestals of King Khasekhem's statues, writhing in pain, enduring tortures devised with every refinement of cruelty.[1] As early as the reign of Aha-Menes, the overthrow of the Red Kingdom had been completed. This first king on the Pharaonic lists founded the monarchy by the union of the two Egypts. At the boundary of the Delta, he erected, in order to control the Red Country, a large wall painted in the colours of the South, the famous White Wall of Memphis, the name of which was retained down to the Greek period, and has been preserved by Herodotus,

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[1] *Cf.* Capart: *La fête de frapper les Anou*, 1901.

[2] Maspero, *Les forgerons d'Horus.*

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[1] Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, i, Pl. 39–40.

Thucydides, and Strabo, as an insulting memorial of the defeat of the North. South of the wall was erected a sanctuary of Phtah-outside-the-walls (literally: "south of his wall"); on the inauguration day, Menes celebrated for the first time the symbolic rites of the union of the papyrus plant (symbolic of the Northern Kingdom) with the lotus flower (symbolic of the Southern Kingdom) tied in one bunch under the throne; he placed on his head the white mitre and the red crown; he marched in a procession around the White Hall, and to the very bounds of Egyptian civilisation. The Pharaohs, Ptolemies, and Cæsars repeated at their coronation these three ceremonies, in commemoration of the defeat of the North and of the union of the two Egypts.[1] Several centuries elapsed before Egypt subsided into a peaceful condition. The attainment of this end, still very imperfectly understood, devolved upon the Thinite Pharaohs. They bequeathed to the Memphite kings of the IIId dynasty a united Egypt, in which we no longer discern any rivalry between Red and White countries, nor any contention between Libyans and Asiatics.

If these invaders imposed their rule, the vanquished transmitted to them their customs. The epoch of the Ist dynasty marks the efflorescence of the arts of the stone age; it is the royal tombs that supply us with the most remarkable specimens of hard-stone vases, especially those marvellous bowls cut out of porphyry, ornamented with ribs, shaped and carved by hand, with incredible skill. The Thinite Pharaohs must have greatly enjoyed these costly table-services; they fortunately had their names engraved upon the dishes, vases, cups, and plates, the fragments of which enable us to trace out or reconstitute the dynastic series.[1] The flint industry was not wiped out by the introduction of weapons and tools of metal, but the large knives, masterpieces of the prehistoric peoples, became show-pieces reserved for the Pharaoh, or else votive offerings for the temples. A splendid specimen found at El-Amrah has its handle adorned with a gold foil, engraved with rosettes and coiling serpents; in another, the massive gold handle, fastened to the blade by three rivets, is decorated with dancing women and a barge floating standards. Diminutive pieces of furniture, used as votive offerings, were incrusted with ivory plates, on which figures of animals were delicately carved; they were made to rest upon bull's legs of ivory in accordance with the traditional Chaldean style. The carved palettes, that the prehistoric peoples placed in the hands of their dead when they buried them in the sand, were now hung up in the temples, for show. Such are the palettes of Hierakonpolis, on which King Narmer has recounted his triumphs over the peoples of the North. Art tended to assume an official character; the popular pottery, which formerly thrived so well, gradually disappeared or relapsed into the most repulsive coarseness, towards the end of the Thinite period.

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[1] Kurt Sethe, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte Ægyptens*, 1906.

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[1] Musée Guimet possesses the practically complete series of the royal names of the Ist dynasty, engraved on fragments of vases, and also several names of the IId dynasty.

Artists henceforth devoted themselves almost exclusively to the service of the gods and the kings. The invaders brought written texts and a religious literature; their ideas were adopted by the whole Egyptian society and their rigorous stamp put upon art. The struggle for life in this world, the eager desire to survive after death, these thoughts loomed large in every mind. Then originated, perhaps successively, perhaps simultaneously, the views regarding the best way of defeating death: in some cases the corpse was burned; in others it was dismembered or cut into pieces; in certain instances, the skeleton was left in a contracted position; again in others, mummification was attempted. Of all these opposing systems, neither the origin nor the development has as yet been elucidated; but one idea asserts itself, from the very first written documents: there is in man a permanent element, which survives the individual, in which even the race is incarnated; it is the double, the genie, the material soul, which fits exactly into the shape of the body, but is not blended with it. In order to save the double from destruction, it was necessary to build a strong tomb and to preserve the corpse in it; for the corpse might be substituted its human likeness, engraved on a stela, reproduced by a statue, or merely recalled by the name. The masons had to construct solid buildings: these were first made of brick, on a level with the ground, like the tombs at Abydos; then, by digging further into the rocky soil, the funeral vault was sunk under the earth, while chambers were built above for the relatives who there practised religious rites. Thus by successive stages was evolved the type exemplified by the Memphite tombs, the different parts of which form a harmonious whole, when once the ideas concerning the hereafter have become synthesised.

But the life of the dead was dependent upon the life of the gods; the first gods, Hor, Set, Shu, Hâthor, Min, passed from Arabia or Pount into

Egypt, and were imposed upon the living and the dead by the priests.[1] Temples, the ruins of which are still to be seen at Abydos and Hierakonpolis, were built for them; and because it was believed that they protected the dead from danger in their life beyond the tomb, kings and subjects worshipped them regularly and honoured them with periodic festivals. Thinite art was, therefore, concerned with the main aim of existence: survival after death, to be secured by means of statues in which the doubles of the gods, the kings, and the dead might live again. More skilled than formerly and supplied, as they were, with iron chisels, the sculptors were able to cut out of ivory, limestone, or wood the crude statue of Min, the delicate effigy of Pharaoh Khasekhem, the heavy common figure of some man or woman of the people, with a clumsy body but an expressive, lifelike face. The likeness had to be striking so that the double might recognise its portrait and inhabit it.

The general ideas by which art was at this time influenced brought about also the transformation of social conditions. The invaders brought with them a political organisation and chiefs: the "Followers of Horus" seem to have been grouped into clans, distinguishable, like the indigenous tribes, by their totems displayed on ensigns. The Red North and the White South soon became subdivided into rival clans: the clans called Hawks, Dog, and Lock of Hair fight for the hawk, Horus; the Lapwing and the Bow contend for the greyhound, Set. Their struggles and triumphs are recorded by engravings on the votive palettes: here, a Greyhound brings a miserable Lapwing hung by the neck; elsewhere the Hawk drags ignominiously a subdued Bow; or the Scorpion and Lion are seen tearing down, with the pickaxe, the strongholds of the rival totems.[1] The great number of mace-heads and monuments decorated with warlike scenes are another proof of the many battles fought by the "Followers of Horus," in their long struggle against the Northerners, their Asiatic rivals, and against the rebellious Libyans.

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[1] V. Loret, *Revue Égyptologique*, xi, and *Horus le Faucon*, 1904.

The reconciliation of the clans and the submission of the natives took place probably at the time when Menes erected the White Wall to control the North, and built his "palace of the double" at Negadeh, a site between Buto and Hierakonpolis, the centre of Thinite Egypt. Then, a curious transformation seems to have begun in the personality of the Pharaoh. Up to this time, the king, being the chief of a particular clan, chose as totem a certain animal supposed to take part in the struggles. The fish, Nar, which stands for the name, Narmer, of the king of Hierakonpolis, is not a sign devoid of life; it is sometimes seen provided with two arms, wielding the mace and knocking down a Libyan. The name of Aha-Menes is composed of a shield and a javelin, brandished by the claws of the hawk, Horus, whose wings are open wide in readiness to fly to battle. After the union of Reds and Whites, the Hawk became an impartial god, no longer descending into the arena, but remaining undisturbed upon his royal perch. Pharaoh no longer treated the bird as a totem, the chief of the clan and a partaker in battle; he adored it as the national god of united Egypt, he assumed its name, and was identified with it, so that the Hawk became the symbol of his sway, and his first name in the official titulary. How could the clan of the Hawk and its chief, the Pharaoh, absorb the other clans and chiefs? Such a result was not obtained without conflict and reciprocal concessions. The two ancient kingdoms of Hierakonpolis and Buto secured for their totems, the Vulture and the Uræus, the honour of being chosen, after the Hawk, as official titles for the king; the Reed of the South and the Bee of the North obtained the same privilege. The Pharaoh thus bought his triumph by adopting, in addition to the Hawk, four of the ancient rival totems, which yielded him in return their moral prestige and material power. After the lapse of a few centuries we shall see the theologians of Heliopolis[1] setting to work in order to combine the chequered history of the clans in one system: they build up the theory of kingship by imagining divine dynasties, founded by the sun, Ra, consolidated by the hawk, Horus, and continued by their son, the Pharaoh, the "son of the Sun, who renews upon earth the duration of the life of Horus."

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[1] V. Loret, *L'Égypte an temps du totémisme*, 1906.

Thus Egypt, under Thinite rule, foreshadows the Memphite Kingdom, its monuments, arts, religious beliefs, and political organisation. But how many points are still lacking in this obscure history that teaches us nothing about the beginnings of the indigenous race, the real origin of the foreign invaders, and very little about the fusion of these two elements, from which arose those Semitised Africans whom we call Egyptians!

Many opinions—which I could not sum up here—have been advanced, as to what the soil still conceals or by way of explaining what it has already yielded. Let us not forget that the great number of speculations launched to-day, necessarily formed rather too hastily, but indispensable nevertheless for the progress of science, will be revised in the near future, in the light of documents which may then have been unearthed. This, however, is certain: in the course of the last few years, the history of mankind has been extended, far back, into the past. A bit of the veil is now raised that hides the origin of the Eastern Mediterranean peoples and their first intercourse. Another point has been gained, thanks to the monuments discovered: the possibility of tracing a race, from the stone age to historic times. This opportunity presents itself in the case of hardly any other people. But, in Egypt, we are able to take up the race at its origin, and to discern the course of civilisation followed by man, from the caverns or crude tombs in the desert down to the imposing piles of the pyramids.

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[1] *Cf.* G. Maspero, *Les Dynasties divines de l'Égypte ancienne*, 1895.

CHAPTER IV

AROUND THE PYRAMIDS

ON the left bank of the Nile, between the juncture of the Delta and the oases of the Fayûm, the pyramids of Lower Egypt lift to heaven their triangular faces, changing from bright to sombre according to the play of light. Firmly rooted in the first terrace of the African plateau, their towering masses rise from the sands high above the cultivated lands. About forty of them are in existence to-day. With hundreds of tombs surrounding them, they mark the successive location of the residences of the Memphite Pharaohs: Sakkarah, Meidun, Dashur (the sites of the IIId dynasty); Gizeh (occupied by the IVth); Abusir and Sakkarah (the seat of the Vth and VIth). The Old Kingdom of Egypt, dating from the year 4000 to the year 3500 before our era, thus survives through its cemeteries, which still stretch around the ancient capital, Memphis, though all the monuments of the latter have disappeared. Even ten years ago, it was believed that the beginnings of Egyptian history and the most ancient memorials of mankind were to be found around the pyramids; but the recent discovery of the prehistoric cemeteries and royal tombs of Abydos have proved the existence of the two first dynasties and disclosed, in its broad outlines, the Thinite civilisation. The royal pyramid-builders have thus been put back to their proper chronological place, *i.e.*, to the second period of the history of Egypt. Nevertheless, the pyramid itself has taken on a deeper significance: to the earlier Thinite period, it was unknown; under the later Theban dynasties, it was abandoned, as early as the XIIth dynasty. the pyramid is thus characteristic of one period, The Old Kingdom; it is found in one region, the vicinity of Memphis. It expresses, therefore, a new artistic and religious ideal.

The architectural conception of the pyramid was not the chance discovery of some genius, but rather the outcome of successive improvements made upon the primitive tombs. The prehistoric inhabitants of Egypt buried their dead in pits where the body, interred at no great depth in the earth, was surrounded by the domestic vessels that had been used by the deceased. The brick buildings appeared later with the influx of the victorious race from Chaldea, which settled in the Nile valley and erected for its kings tombs that were a great improvement upon those of the native people. The primitive pit was enlarged and made rectangular, its crumbling sides were supported by a lining of bricks, and a wooden roof isolated the body from the earth thrown upon it; jars and other implements, instead of being placed around the body, were distributed in small adjoining compartments, while the central pit remained the sepulchral chamber. The whole presented the appearance of a structure low and elongated, covered with sand; it was approached by a side stairway of brick.

Such was the royal tomb at the beginning of the Thinite period. In order to render inviolable the resting-place for the soul and the body, the destiny of which becomes of increasing importance to a people of inquiring mind, the vault was hollowed out of the very rock. It resembled a long passage, roofed over by impenetrable rock. The weak point of it was the unguarded incline leading to the tomb. The architects sunk several narrow shafts perpendicular to the rocky roof; the body once interred, enormous stones were let down through those shafts, thus blocking the passage of approach. The shafts opened on a level with the ground, but were concealed by heaps of sand and of gravel kept in place by a stone curbing. So well protected, a tomb was no longer accessible to the family of the dead; how could they then administer to the wants of the deceased in the other world? On the heap of sand, just above the body, they buried vessels containing food; then a little chapel was built at the entrance of the stairway, to which the relatives might repair to bring offerings and to say their prayers. This scheme of construction survived until the plan of the tomb was altered so as to do away with the sloping approach, which was deemed insecure. A vertical shaft, passing down through the superstructure of masonry, allowed the corpse to be lowered by means of ropes; after the funeral ceremony, the shaft was filled and its opening carefully covered up. The tiny chapel was then transferred to the side facing the East, and had the appearance of a narrow passage, ending with a false door, carved in relief, which was supposed to give access to the mortuary chamber.[1] As a result of the many attempts to perfect it, the Thinite tomb had become, at the beginning of the IIId dynasty, a sort of fortified house, sunk in the rock and built above the level of the ground, including an inaccessible grave, dumb wells, and a chapel chamber for the use of the relatives. Seen from a distance, the structure resembles a stone cube or bench, such as the Arabs put before their own houses and which they call "mastaba," a designation adopted for the tombs belonging to the Memphite period.

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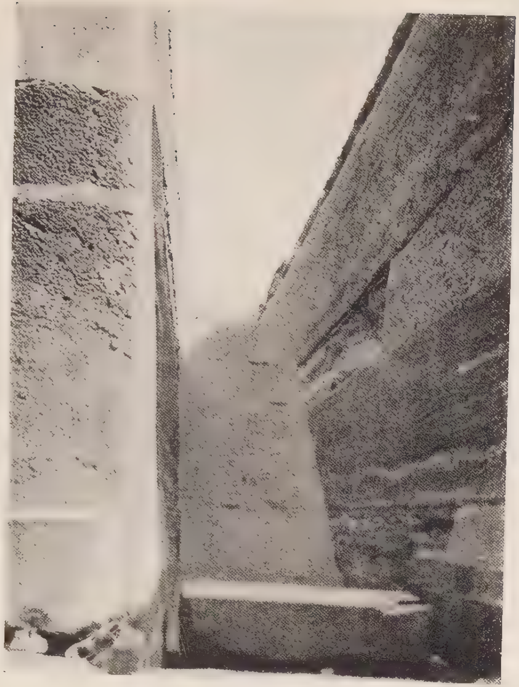
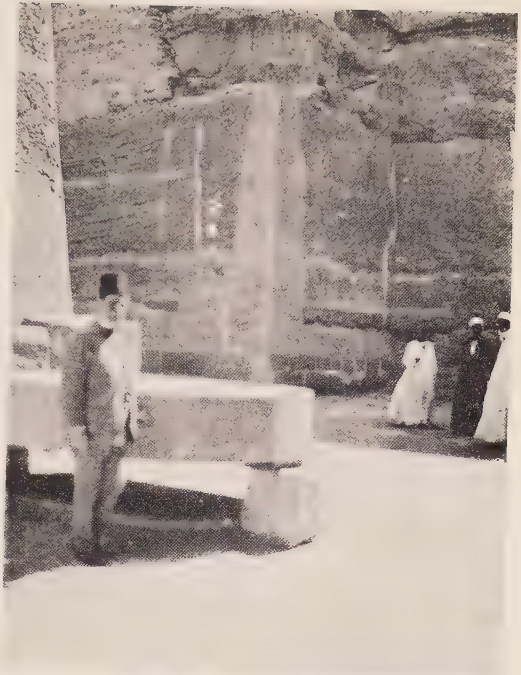
[1] J. Gerstang, *The Third Egyptian Dynasty*, 1904, chap. vii; Plates XX–XXI.

A parallel transformation can be followed up in the kind of material used for constructing the tombs. Like the Chaldeans, the Egyptians from Asia used at first chiefly brick. After they had settled in the Nile valley, the rocky banks of the desert plateau furnished them with the coarse or fine limestone from Mokattam or Tourah, sandstone from Silsileh alabaster, granite, and basalt from Assouan. The newcomers learned the art of using those materials from the natives, who were skilled in polishing all hard stones. In their desire to construct imperishable tombs, the Pharaohs prompted their subjects to erect colossal structures; out of the primitive craftsmen in pottery they made stone-carvers and builders. As far back as the Ist dynasty, King Ousaphaïs supplanted the usual wooden floor of the tomb by



The Incline Used in Descending.



The Vat of Granite.

Plate VI.

one of granite; a chamber in Khasekhemui's tomb (IId dynasty) is built of limestone hewn and fitted and this is the earliest instance known of a stone structure. The same king furnished the temple of Horus at Hierakonpolis with splendid doors of red granite, the posts of which are to-day in Cairo Museum. Judging from these fragments, the Egyptians were even as early as this period most accomplished artisans.

Soon we see them applying themselves to more ambitious works. The Sphinx of Gizeh (Plate VIII, 1), a gigantic spur of rock, hewn in the shape of a lion with human head, dates perhaps from that time; the meditative majesty of that splendid face, now mutilated, shows what degree of technical skill and of expressive power the Egyptian artists had already attained. Does the temple adjoining the Sphinx, which bears no inscription that might indicate its date, belong to the same period? Looking at its huge, covered halls, of which the square pillars in red granite alone remain, its narrow, low sanctuaries, roofed over by a single stone, its vaulted chambers made of alabaster, we are tempted to assign the building to the early age of Egyptian art which is characterised by such sober and massive style, impressive grandeur and mystery (Plate VIII, 2).

The same kind of emotion is stirred by a puzzling structure recently brought to light by M. Barsanti (Service des Antiquités), near Zaouiet-el-Aryan, half-way between Gizeh and Sakkarah. It is considered the great curiosity of Memphite Egypt and as it certainly dates from the end of the Thinite period, it enables us to assign approximate dates to other structures which exhibit similar features.

The part remaining of the edifice is seen at the bottom of a pit in the shape of a T, 328 feet long, 82 feet wide, and 98 feet deep. The limestone plateau was simply hollowed out, but the cross-sections present as smooth a surface as a roll of butter cut with a thread. The bottom is reached by an incline consisting of a central slide, intended for the descent of building materials, and a precipitous stairway, with well-worn steps on each side (Plate VI, 1). The pit had been filled with more than 142,850 cubic feet of rubble and rubbish, which had to be removed before the pavement, made of enormous blocks of red granite, could be revealed. M. Barsanti hoped that by removing one of these pavement stones he might disclose a burial-chamber, for a few fragments found in the rubbish bore the name of King Nofirka, of the IId dynasty. But once lifted, this block showed another block below, and underneath three layers were superposed, the lowest resting on the very rock. Where was the burial-vault? In order to find it, M. Barsanti hired skilled granite-cutters, formerly engaged in the dam-works at Assouan, and had them open a tunnel through the rock, an achievement worthy of the old Pharaohs. The tunnel, which I recently visited, with M. Barsanti as guide, has up to the present given the indication that the mass is compact; many Egyptologists think, indeed, that the floor does not conceal any secret chamber, but was simply devised as a foundation for structures that were never built. M. Barsanti firmly believes that the floor is a ceiling to an undiscovered tomb. His conviction seems to be corroborated by a curious arrangement in the floor. One of the granite blocks has been hollowed out in an oval shape; the cavity measures over six feet in length and three feet in depth; a splendid lid with four handles covers it, polished like a mirror and as carefully finished as an exquisite jewel (Plate VI, 2).

> It was [wrote M. Barsanti] with genuine emotion that I lifted the lid; but when the base was uncovered, it was found completely empty. All that I noticed was a blackish band, four inches broad,

running around the inside, probably some slight deposit of a liquid poured into this hollow as an offering or a libation, and which has evaporated in the course of time.[1]

It may be, indeed, that a funeral chamber was dug directly underneath the trough-shaped object, as such was the procedure in the case of the mastabas, the roofs of which were used as receptacles for offerings. In order to solve this problem, M. Barsanti was duly authorised by the Service des Antiquités to remove, piece by piece, all the superposed blocks of the four layers; he will not replace them until the lowest depths of the excavation have been explored.

Whatever its *raison d' être*, the structure of Nofirka shows us, as does the temple of the Sphinx, the preference of the Pharaohs of that time for huge structures built with materials of a commensurate size.

> The impression received at Zaouiet-el-Aryan [says M. Maspero] is one never to be forgotten. The form and choice of the materials, the skilled workmanship evinced in the cut and in the jointures, the exquisite finish of the granite trough, the boldness of the lines and height of the walls, all combine to create an effect that is unmatched to the present day. It is a most impressive sight and nowhere is the

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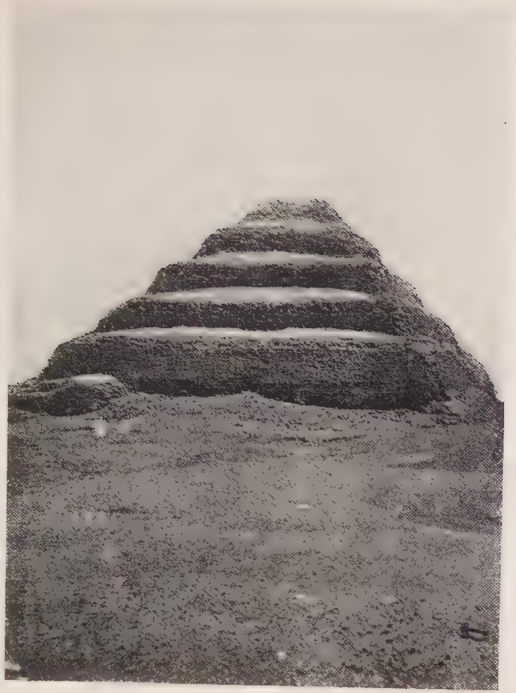
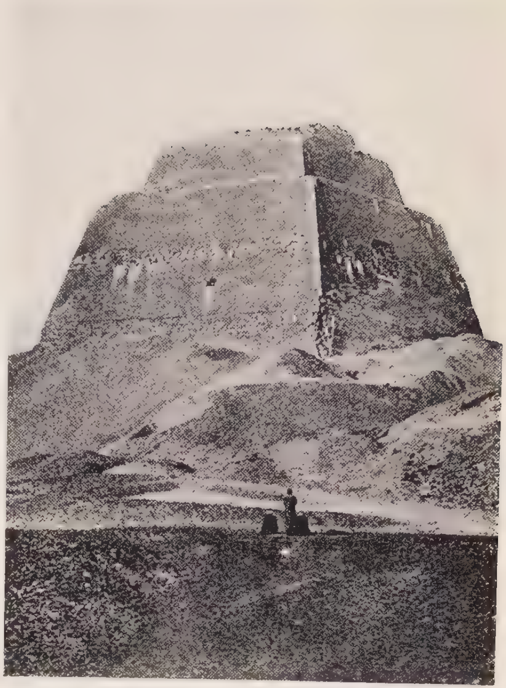
[1] *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, vii, p. 285.



I. The Step Pyramid of Sakkarah,
Erected by Zeser.



II. Pyramid of Sneferû at Meidun.

Plate VII.

power of the ancient Egyptian architects revealed with such force.[1]

The increasing boldness of the constructors, and their tendency to erect structures of greater height and of greater depth, causing the Egyptian tomb to unfold new lines, finally culminated in that magnificent conception, the pyramid. The first was erected on the site of Sakkarah, by Zeser, one of the last sovereigns of the IIId dynasty (about 4100 B C.). Zeser is an important personage in Egyptian history; from Sinai to Elephantine, monuments have preserved his name, but the particulars of his doughty deeds are not known. Even in Hellenic times Zeser was credited with having introduced the method of fitting stones for building purposes; at any rate, his reign marks the extensive use of stone-work and the supremacy of stone over brick. Like his predecessors, however, Zeser began by building his own tomb of brick, on the site of Bet-Khallâf, near Abydos.[2] It is a huge mastaba, erected above several funeral chambers, that are approached by a passage guarded by five plug-blocks. The tomb was never used. Perhaps it was abandoned at the suggestion of a great courtier, Imhotep, whose reputation as an architect and magician has outlived the centuries. Zeser, leaving the Thinite cemeteries, removed his own residence to the White Hall of Memphis and chose Sakkarah for his burial-place. There rises his "terraced" pyramid, which forms a transition between the massive rectangular mastaba and the sharp outlines of the triangular pyramid. It is a four-sided structure, composed of six huge terraces, about twenty-seven feet high; each one is indented six feet more than the one below it; the total height is 1805 feet. Apparently six mastabas of decreasing size have been placed one on the top of the other; there seems to be nothing new about this, except a successive superposition of mastabas, the top of one serving as the base of the next. In reality, the conception is bolder. First of all, the architects have substituted stone for brick; then, instead of constructing a terrace as a base, on which to superimpose five others, they started from the base to carry the whole mass upward, forming parallel sides, the slant of which was interrupted, so as to form gradual steps on the outside.[1] We find here no hesitation: the workmen clearly devised a building, rising from the earth, in a towering form, towards the sky. (Plate VII, 1).

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[1] *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, vii, p. 259.

[2] J. Gerstang, *Mahâsna and Bet-Khallâf*, 1902.

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[1] *Cf.* Choisy, *L'art de construire chez les Égyptiens.*

In time, the "steps," marking as many interruptions in the ascending line, diminished in size. One of the successors of Zeser, Snefru, erected on the site of Meidun,[1] south of Sakkarah, a pyramid of similar style; but the width of each step is less by half, which makes the rise appear more continuous (Plate VII, 2). Later Snefru accentuated this upward movement still more, in a second pyramid, which he had built at Dashur. The base of this structure has about the same slant as the sides of a mastaba; then, without intermediate steps, the four edges converge boldly towards the sky, assuming for the first time pyramidal form. The successive attempts of Zeser and Snefru resulted, about 4000 B.C., in the characteristic conception of a building "emerging from the ground,"[2] projecting its four smooth surfaces upward until they form an apex, then letting them slope to earth again in perfect triangles.

The architectural formula of the pyramid, which the kings of the IVth dynasty applied, was thus set down.

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[1] *Cf.* Fl. Petrie, *Medum*, 1892.

[2] This is the meaning of the hieroglyphics "*per m ous*," whence the Greek word *pyramis* is derived. *Cf.* Eisenlohr, *Ein mathematisches Handbuch der alten Ägypter*, p. 260.

It seems as if Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus had yielded to a kind of rapture when they applied this formula to dimensions so Titanic as those of the three pyramids of Gizeh. The one called "Horizont," built by Cheops, was 481 feet high and its square base measured 755 feet on a side; the "Great," built by Chephren, was 452 feet high and its base measured 705 feet on a side; the "Supreme" built by Mycerinus, was 217 feet high and measured 354 feet on a side. Building on a colossal scale reached its highest development at the beginning of the fourth dynasty and, after having produced all the effects of which it was capable, gradually declined. This impression is felt at once by the visitor. The great pyramid appears first at the edge of the desert; its enormous dimensions bear witness to a dream of exalted grandeur that could be realised but once. The second and third pyramids, built diagonally to the first, rise behind the latter, one with more slender outlines, the other with decidedly smaller proportions, which restore the mind to more reasonable and moderate ideas, so that after the first sensation of amazement, an eager desire is felt to understand the secret of the construction and the purpose of these monuments[1] (Plate IX, 1).

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[1] Nobody has better expressed the impression produced by the

Gizeh.

I. Sphinx and Pyramid of Chephren.

II. Temple of the Sphinx.

Plate VIII.

The clearing, which M. Maspero has directed during the last few years, around the pyramid of Ounas, at Sakkarah, has enabled us to interpret the plan of any pyramid. It comprises three parts: inside the mortuary chambers; all around, the pyramidal core of masonry; outside, the chapel, where the religious service was held. The whole was encompassed by a wall, and in the

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great pyramids seen at close view than Jomard, in his treatise on Memphis and the Pyramids (*Description de l'Égypte*, ed. in 8vo, vol. v, p. 597): "Their tops, seen from a distance, produce the same effect as summits of high pyramidal mountains, which are outlined against the sky. The nearer one approaches the more this effect decreases. But when one is only a short distance from these regular piles, quite a different impression follows: one is struck with surprise, and climbing the hill one's ideas are changed quite suddenly. Finally when the foot of the great pyramid is reached, one is overcome by a powerful emotion, tempered by a kind of amazement and overwhelming stupor. The top and angles disappear from view; what is felt is not that kind of admiration inspired by a masterpiece of art; it is a feeling far deeper than a mere æsthetic sensation. The effect lies in the size and the simplicity of form; in the contrast between the stature of man and the immensity of the work of his hands; the eye can not embrace it, the mind can scarcely grasp it. It is then that a real conception is formed of this enormous mass of cut stones, piled up in order to a prodigious height. There are seen hundreds of courses of stone 200 cubic feet in size and of the weight of 500 hundredweight, thousands of others similar, and it is difficult to understand by what means such colossal stones have been quarried, conveyed, piled up, or to conjecture how many men were necessary, what time was required, what machinery employed, in so great a work. The more difficult it is to explain all these things, the more the power, which so easily triumphed over such obstacles, is to be admired."

pyramid-enclosure are to be found the tombs of the relatives of the king, or those of courtiers and friends.

The work was begun by an excavation in the rocky hill of the desert: the ruined pyramid of Abû-Roasch, cleared by M. Chassinat, and the monument of Zaouiet-el-Aryan are good instances of such substructures on a vast scale. The sepulchral chamber was then cut out in the rock as well as the stairs leading to it; choice material was reserved for it, fine limestone from Turah, or granite from Assouan. Around this nucleus, the entrance to which was still left open, the pyramidal mass was erected in courses of limestone blocks, cut out from the plateau itself, or from the quarries of the Arabic range. These blocks were easily floated across the Nile, especially at high water, when the river washes the cliffs, from Gizeh to Sakkarah; they were then dragged up the plateau, along the causeways still visible in many places.

It has been a bone of contention for a long time, whether the pyramid was constructed with definite dimensions in mind and according to a clear design, or whether the first nucleus, enclosing the mortuary chamber, was not, in itself, a small pyramid, which increased in height and in breadth, according to the resources and the time that each king might devote to it. The existence, in certain pyramids, of passages of approach, actually imbedded in the core of masonry, and also the arrangement of the courses of stone have made prevalent the theory of Lepsius: every pyramid develops by enlargement and super-additions around a nucleus of finished form. At first, it is about 164 feet at the base, and proportionately high; then, successive coatings raise its dimensions to the figures that we have at present, the final size thus being fixed either by the death of the king, or by his own decision. The construction presented no other difficulty than the immensity of the task; an incline enabled the blocks to be hoisted, step by step, to the desired height, on little wooden machines, which Herodotus described and M. Legrain has recently reconstructed.[1] After the narrow top platform was in place, the final process was to add, from top to base, one smooth casing, which made of each side one continuous surface. Between every two of these courses of stone was fitted a block, the exterior side of which was bevelled, and the workmen, descending step by step, left above them one smooth, regular slope on each side of the pyramid (Plate VIII, 1, and XII, 1).

Inside, are usually found several chambers with as many passages of approach; this multiplicity may be accounted for by the successive changes of design, for one sepulchral chamber should practically be sufficient for one Pharaoh. Visitors who are not afraid of an uncomfortable descent on very slippery ground, through passages low and poorly ventilated, where the thermometer registers 86° F. are well repaid with the peculiar emotion excited by this pilgrimage to the tomb of Cheops. On the north side, about forty feet above ground, is the opening of a steep incline; the broken outer casing exposes four enormous limestone beams, every two propping each other up by their bevelled tops. This buttress reproduces the triangular profile of the pyramid; its very simple, pure lines confer an indescribable beauty on this door to the other world (Plate X).

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[1] Herodotus, II, 125.

A hinging stone, with trap-door in the roof,[1] blocked up the entrance in former times; when it was swung around, a gallery appeared, seven hundred feet long and three feet high. The space, between the polished walls, was just large enough to make it possible to slide a coffin down the incline but the visitors had to descend in a stooping posture, their feet being prevented from slipping by grooves cut in the floor at regular intervals. A horizontal landing is thus reached, from which a descending passage leads to a subterranean chamber, cut out in the rock, thirty-two yards under ground; it was the primitive sepulchral chamber, later abandoned. From the same landing, an ascending passage leads to the centre of the pyramid, but three great portcullises were let down after the day of burial, to cut off access to it. From ancient times, treasure-seekers have overcome the obstacle by running, above the plug-blocks, a drift-way, through which visitors may now pass. Another low passage, thirty-six yards long, leads to a second landing from which two galleries open out. One, horizontal, and forty-one yards long, leads to a granite chamber with a triangular ceiling, which seems to be another sepulchral chamber, also left unused, in consequence of the enlargement of the structure. The other passage runs upwards and opens into a very spacious gallery, twenty-eight feet high, seven feet wide, and one hundred and sixty-two feet long. The construction of the grand gallery is very peculiar. On each side, a sort of bench or footway, twenty-four inches high, diminishes the width by twenty inches; it has on the upper surface notches for the feet, a very useful device, considering the fact that the incline is very steep and the stone bears a high polish. The coffin was probably made to slide along on the floor of the gallery, between these foot-ways, which were used perhaps as tow-paths. The roof is not less curious than the floor; it consists of seven courses of stone, arranged in corbels.

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[1] *Cf.* Strabon, xvii, p. 808: "The pyramid has, on its sides, at a moderate height, a stone that can be removed; when it is lifted up, one sees a winding passage leading to the tomb."

> Owing to an optical illusion [writes Jomard], the lines appear curved, though the front side of every layer is vertical, and they seem to form a very pointed arch. So high is the polish on the stone and so finished the workmanship that many in my party were at first inclined to think that the material was granite or marble. The joints are almost imperceptible; a knife blade could not pass between them. The whole construction is of exquisite finish, but no less astonishing is the solidity of the workmanship, which has insured its perfect preservation, in spite of the enormous weight upon this false vault.[1] (Plate XI, 2.)

The grand gallery opens into several chambers, composing the royal sepulchre. Here the number of obstacles is purposely increased. A threshold, three feet high, must be stepped over, then a low passage leads to a vestibule, over nine feet high,

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[1] *Description* . . . , v, p. 627. The grand gallery is in reality built of fine limestone from Mokattam.

I. The Great Pyramids of the IVth Dynasty.

II. The Pyramid of Ounas, Chapel and Tomb.

Plate IX.

where the portcullises were kept. One is still in its original place, held up about three feet above ground by a little notch in the slide; the other three have disappeared, or were never placed. Why was the portcullis not lowered after the burial? This question cannot be answered, but it is not without anxiety that the visitor crawls along under that mass of granite, which seems ready to fall. Finally the funeral chamber is reached; it is built in the axis of the pyramid, 131 feet above ground and three hundred feet under the apex. It is a granite blockhouse thirty-four feet long, sixteen feet wide, and twenty feet high, built of enormous stones, very well wrought.

> The room is intact and the polish of its walls has a high finish; the joints of the granite layers, six in number and uniform in height, are scarcely noticeable; the roof is formed of monolithic pieces, twenty feet long. The same thing that was noticeable in the case of the shafts and the galleries, is to be observed here: there are no cracks, nor can any displacement be noticed; not one stone has slipped since it was put in place; everything is well poised and on a level.[1]

In one corner is the granite sarcophagus, a rectangular box, without any ornaments or inscriptions; the lid is lacking; the mummy and funeral equipment have disappeared. Above the King's chamber, five little rooms with low ceilings have been built, one above the other, so as to divide the weight of the roof; they can be reached by means of a ladder from the grand gallery (Plate XI, 1). On these blocks of masonry above the King's chamber, the name of King Khufu (Cheops) is found repeatedly written in red paint in the royal cartouche. This quarry-mark confirms the traditional attribution of this pyramid to its builder.

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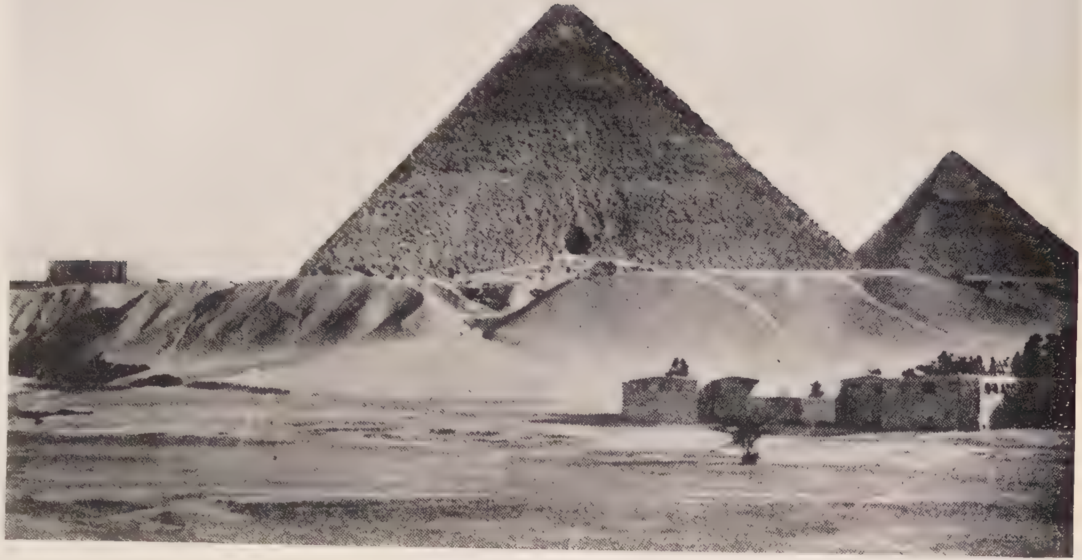
[1] *Cf.* with opinion of Petrie: *A History of Egypt*, i, p. 41.

The many precautions taken to bar access to the pyramid prove that, as in the case of the mastabas, no one was allowed to enter after the coffin had been put in place. The funeral service for the king had, therefore, to be celebrated in an exterior chapel, erected on the side of the pyramid facing the east. The "Horizont" of Cheops has retained nothing of this temple, except portions of a basalt pavement, but on the east side of the "Great" and of the "Supreme," parts of the walls still remain; at Sakkarah, the chapel of Ounas (Plate XI, 2) still presents bas-reliefs and columns of red granite. It is in the rites celebrated in these funeral temples that the true "secret" of the pyramids lies. They have been known to us since M. Maspero discovered in the little pyramids of Sakkarah (Vth and VIth dynas-



Pyramids of Cheops and Chephren (northern face).

Plate X.

ties) the texts that are lacking in the splendid sepulchres of Gizeh.[1] It is there that the explanation must be sought of these colossal monuments which have aroused the curiosity of the world.

The pyramids are tombs; but to understand the meaning attached to this word "tomb" by the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom we must put aside every modern idea about death, as the latter is for us necessarily opposed to life. The Egyptians at the dawn of history, like the non-civilised people of our times, did not conceive of death as the contrary of life, or of the tomb as a place of annihilation; for them, a dead person was in a particular state, not requiring conditions radically different from those surrounding him during his lifetime. Now such conditions are well explained by primitive people. "The savage," writes Frazer, in his admirable book on primitive beliefs,[2] "commonly explains the processes of inanimate nature by supposing that they are produced by living beings working in or behind the phenomena, so he explains the phenomena of life itself. If an animal lives and moves, it can only be, he thinks, because there is a little animal inside which moves it. If a man lives and moves, it can only be because he has a little man or animal inside who moves him. The animal inside the animal, the man inside the man, is the soul." For many of the non-civilised, the human soul takes on the shape and the facial characteristics of the individual, whom it animates except that it is much smaller than he. In like manner the Egyptians believed that everything that lives—gods, men, animals, trees, stones, and all objects whatsoever—encloses its own diminutive image, which is its soul. They called that image or projection of the individual, Ka; we translate it as Double or Genie; the Ka is represented as a being somewhat smaller than the person in whom he is indwelling but in other respects exactly like him. We must add, that, similar in this respect to many savages of the present day, the Egyptians adhered not only to that conception of the soul, but also had, besides the Double, which was closely bound up with the body, the notion of a moving and spiritual soul, symbolised by the Ba, a human-headed bird; they also saw in the "shadow" and in the "name" of man other manifestations of the diminutive soul within him.

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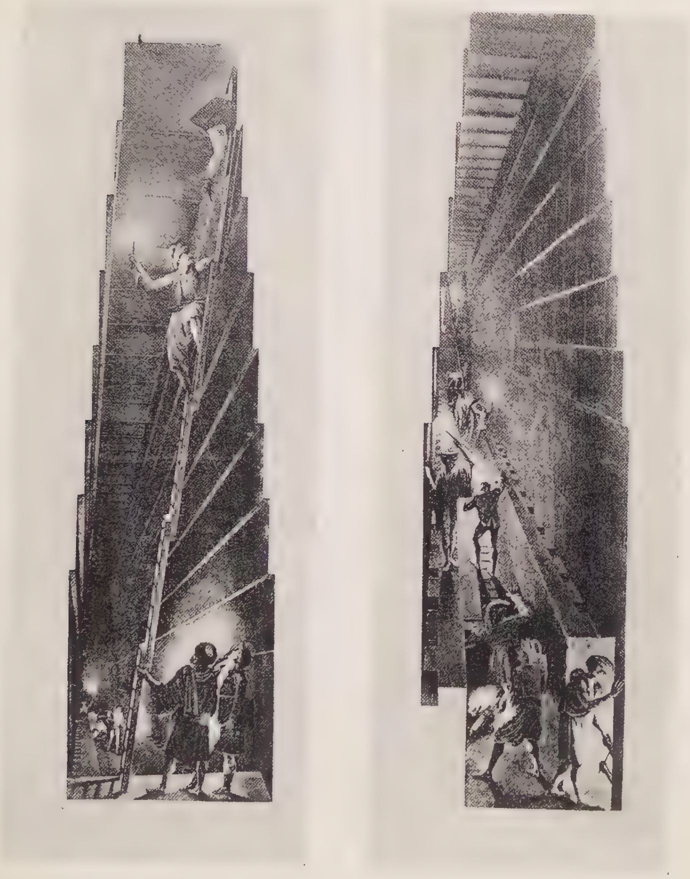
[1] The texts quoted further on are borrowed from Maspero's remarkable work: *Les Inscriptions des pyramides de Sakkarah*, text and translation.

[2] *The Golden Bough.* 2d ed., 1900, vol. i, p. 247.

As a consequence of this belief it followed that life was supposed to last as long as each individual

In the Great Pyramid.



From *La Description de l'Égypte.*

I. Exploration of the Chambers.

II. The Large Ascending Gallery.

Plate XI.

enjoyed the union of body and Double; yet, during sleep, in the course of certain kinds of illness, accompanied by fainting or unconsciousness, the Double vanished; after sleep and swoons, when man regained his consciousness, it was because he recovered his Double. Now, what we call death they regarded as but a prolonged swoon, unconsciousness, apt to cease, whenever the Double returned. After death, each of the two component parts of man, body and Double, lived on, but separately. In order to render death harmless, it was necessary, therefore, to preserve the body from decomposition, the dismal consequence of separation. Every effort had to be made to keep it intact, so that the soul, its Double, might recognise and inhabit it again on its return. It was necessary also to provide the wandering soul with a sheltering place; hence the necessity of funeral rites, the purpose of which was to preserve the body and secure a safe abode for the soul.

These notions alone would be sufficient to explain the transcendent importance of the tomb, life's abiding-place, according to the Egyptians; but primitive people are rarely satisfied with such simple conceptions. Although they dreaded the temporary absence of the Double, which resulted in sleep, or its prolonged absence, which resulted in the unconscious life of death, the Egyptians entertained a belief still held by many savages at present. The parting of soul and body was perilous only when it occurred independently, uncontrolled by the will, but it was on the contrary a wise thing to facilitate the exit of the Double from the body by offering it a safe abode and by protecting it from dangers. Some tribes entrust their souls to an animal, a plant, any object, which thus becomes a sacred being, a totem; other men prefer hiding the soul in a secret place, or a fortified house, which may serve as a tomb for the body. In Egypt, pyramids and tombs were but such "castles for the Double," built by the Pharaohs and their subjects during their lifetime; the Doubles were expected to come there and inhabit the statues of the living, statues with bodies that followed a general type but with faces bearing a resemblance to the original, like a true portrait. The soul was thus protected against dangers, from which the body cannot always escape. As long as the body was living the ordinary life, it made provision for the care of its Double, in the tomb; great dignitaries of the court assumed the office of "slaves to the Double" of the Pharaohs; private people secured similar services from professional priests, by means of contracts and endowments. In the prime of their lives, the Egyptians seem to have been haunted by the obsession of the tomb. To construct from early youth the stronghold in which the body would one day repose; to place securely therein the statues in which the Double might abide;[1] to go there on festive occasions to visit the tomb and worship one's own Genie;[2] and to secure for this Genie full measure of protection, so that it might escape the many vicissitudes of wordly life—such was the ideal of a happy career in Memphite times. When death occurred, it was said that the body "passed over to its Double," an expression that seems to suggest that the latter already inhabited the tomb.

The Egyptian tomb was, therefore, above all, the house where resided what was most vital, most real, most permanent in an individual. Should we then be astonished that during a period when this comforting belief was held by mankind, kings and subjects wasted their wealth in order to build imperishable dungeons, fortresses for the soul and for the body? It was an inordinate love of life, a desperate struggle for existence which fired the minds of the pyramid-builders. In these "eternal places of abode," where we hunt only for death, they revelled in the hope of eternal life.

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[1] See, for instance, Maspero's *Contes populaires*, 3d ed., p. 81.

[2] See Stela of Hossi, Cairo, published in *Musée Égyptien*, Pl. XXII.

This was possible only if the body could be revivified after having succumbed to death. If placed in the tomb in its natural state, a rigid corpse, subject to decomposition, instead of being of use it was rather an encumbrance to the Double. The problem of preserving the body by mummification was solved as early as the Memphite period. It would be of great interest to follow up the different stages of the process; the funeral rites of the Thinite period, it seems, made no provision for mummification, and are difficult to interpret. In the very ancient tombs, crouching and contracted corpses are found; elsewhere, skeletons are dismembered, the heads separated from the bodies, the bones broken, as if the deceased had been made a victim of sacrifice; or the disjointed bones have been carefully heaped up with the head placed on top, in order to give a new form to the interred body. These practices, to which rituals of later time make frequent allusions, were abandoned at the beginning of the Memphite Kingdom and supplanted by rites that assured the preservation of the corpse in its entirety. We do not yet know for certain how this change, the effects of which were so enduring, was brought about; when the Egyptians refer to this new method, they account for it by a divine revelation, a benefit conferred on them by the favour of the god Anubis.[1] It is he, known as "the Lord of swathing-bands," who is said to have taught men the art of preventing decay by the removal of the entrails, by means of the natron bath and the aseptic substances, and by the use of bandages to shield the body from contact with the air.

The body kept free from putrefaction was but an inert mummy, blind, deaf, and without conscience. A new revelation had been necessary to teach men the art of restoring to the mummy its faculties and recalling the soul that had been set free. We find these rites established at the end of the IIId dynasty,[2] and attributed to Osiris, "the benevolent god," "the Redeemer," who benefited mankind by subjecting himself, in advance of all others, to the test.[3] It was related that Osiris, in the time of the divine dynasties (which ruled Egypt before the Pharaohs), had been murdered, then dismembered by his brother Set, and that he was the first of all beings to know death. By the magic science of his wife, Isis, of his sister, Nephthys, of his son, Horus, of Anubis and Thot, his allies, all the pieces of the body of Osiris were recovered, rendered aseptic, and reconstituted into a perfect mummy. In order to restore motion and the use of all its other faculties to this lifeless body, Thot and Horus touched the mouth, eyes, and ears, and unbound the arms and legs by means of magic instruments. The soul was still absent, held prisoner by Set. Horus and Thot pursued the latter, who in vain entered a bull, a gazelle, a cow, a goose, in the hope of concealing himself. From the heart of these animals, captured and sacrificed, the soul of Osiris was retrieved; Horus restored it to his father and by a kiss communicated to him the breath of life. Osiris, thus resuscitated and reunited to his soul, became the exalted Being, surpassing all others, because he had crossed victoriously over the threshold of death and triumphed over the great terror. Such a being, able to live the perfect life, without fearing death, from which he had been rendered immune, is properly considered a god.[1]

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[1] Maspero, *Histoire*, i, pp. 112 and 178.

[2] In the tomb of Mten (end of IIId dynasty) the rites of the Ap-ro are executed.

[3] Maspero, *Rituel de l'embaumement*, and *Historie*, i, p. 18.

Osiris's example was henceforth to be followed by all who live in heaven and on earth and who some day must die. No one in heaven or on earth is exempted from the common fate, but the example of Osiris and the funeral rites instituted by Horus and Thot were welcomed as a means of attaining eternal life. Each of the gods chose to experience death, that they might be revivified for ever; it was their earthly son, the Pharaoh, who played for them the part of the "beloved son," opening the mouth of his father and kissing him, to call back the soul. Every mortal might hope, in the same way, to become a god. On the day of the funeral, the eldest son of the family would say that he was Horus or Thot, and would repeat for his father the rites of the great mystery, by virtue of which the deceased became an Osiris.

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[1] Moret, *Le Rituel du culte divin en Égypte*, 1902, p. 200.

These rites are known to us, in their most ancient form, by the texts found in the pyramids of Sakkarah and inside the mastabas. They were celebrated in the pyramid-chapels, which have since fallen down, and in the mastabas, of which thousands have been cleared (Plate XII, 2). An important part of the funeral chamber was the false door, out of which grew the stela. It was supposed to lead to the other world, the residence of the Double. Behind its solid panels, a passage (*serdab*) was concealed, in which the statues of the Double were secluded; below the door, deep under ground, was the sepulchral vault, into which the mummy was to be let down. On the day of burial, the body, wrapped in bandages, and embalmed according to the processes of Anubis, was brought before the false door, or door-shaped stela. All around were the chief mourners. The wife and the sister of the deceased, acting as if they were Isis and Nephthys, came to weep over and take care of Osiris. The eldest son went forth: he had purified and clothed himself in the skin of a panther, he offered the lighted incense, which "makes divine," and wielded the bent iron, which Horus used of old to open the mouth of Osiris. Near the son stood the official priest, a papyrus scroll in his hand, ready to prompt the ritual words and gestures, if memory should fail the child of the deceased (Plate XV). There were other people officiating, and the relatives and clients assembled, forming a kind of chorus, intensified the effect of the words and gestures by repeating them. Meanwhile, the sacrificers, having slain the bull, the gazelle, and the goose, moved forward bearing the thigh, the heart, and the head.

Then began the most important rites. Ablutions and fumigations of incense rendered the

Gizeh.

I. West Side of the Great Pyramid.

II. A Mastaba with Two Doors.

Plate XII.

body free from all physical and moral impurities: "all that should not remain in it falls to the ground." Then, Horus, the beloved son, pretended to open the mouth, the eyes, the ears of his father with magic instruments; he rubbed them with his little finger; he touched them with the heart and the thigh of the victims, while he chanted a psalm: "Arise, father, arise, Osiris, for I, thy son, I, Horus, have come to thee to wash thee, to purify thee, to restore thee to life, to embrace thy bones, to gather together thy frame, to embrace thy fragments; for I am Horus, remodelling his father.[1] . . . Horus has opened thy eye, that thou mayest see with thy eye,[2] . . . thy mouth has been opened, and it is Horus with his little finger, with which he opened the mouth of his father Osiris;[3] thy eyes have been given thee that thou mayest see, thy ears that thou mayest hear that which goes forth from thy mouth as words, thy legs that thou mayest walk and thy arms that thou mayest use them."[4] And the son embraced, with both arms, the corpse of his father, he drew his own face to the mummified face, so that, during this embrace, the magic vital fluid

[1] *Pyramide de Mirinri*, 446.

[2] *Pyramide de Téti*, 264.

[3] *Pyramide de Pépi*, i, 590.

[4] Formula of the Middle Kingdom (El-Kab).

might pass from the living body into the corpse, the breath of life be transmitted from mouth to mouth. The chorus then chanted: "Horus comes, he embraces thee, Osiris. . . . Thy son Horus has struck Set, plucked out his eye with his own hand, and he has given it to thee with thy soul, which is enclosed in it, and thy shape, which is likewise enclosed in it."[1]

The body was now revivified and provided with a soul. Provision had to be made to secure food and drink for his eternal life. A table was set for the mummy; round plates were left there, containing meat, bread, fruit, wine, beer, liquors, and water, a copious meal, the menu of which was inscribed at length on the walls of the tomb. A few choice morsels were burned upon the altar before the mummy, who was supposed to feed on the smoke; the rest supplied the table at which relatives and friends took their places. The feast was accompanied by dances and songs, with the music of flutes and harps. Words of good omen were addressed to the new god: "Hunger, do not attack that Osiris[2] . . . hunger is his horror, and he does not eat it;[3] thirst is his horror, and he does not drink it. O gods, you have taken this

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[1] See texts given by A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin*, p. 88.

[2] *Pyramide de Téti*, 54.

[3] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 109.

Osiris among your company; he eats of what you eat, he lives on the things you live on . . . in this land to which he repairs, he will never again have hunger nor thirst."[1]

After the repast, the mummy was once more purified with water and incense. Now it was left in charge of those who slid it along the low passages, down to the deepest recess of the pyramid, or to the bottom of the mastaba. After the plug-blocks had been lowered, the shafts filled, this corpse was to be ever remembered by the living. On appointed days, rather frequently, relatives and priests met before the false door and repeated the rites that had vivifying properties. The mummy was no longer there, but on the false door shaped like a stela was seen the portrait of the deceased. Sometimes, in the recess of the false door, is seen the upright figure of the defunct, with the left leg advanced as if ready to descend the flight of steps that leads to the place for mortals;[2] sometimes half the body or the face alone is seen emerging above the lintel;[3] it seems as if the deceased wished to look out and enjoy a talk with his children. Very often, a narrow channel, a slit, a few inches wide, connected the cultus chamber with the *serdab* where the statues of the Double were concealed; through this opening passed the perfume of the incense and the smoke of the altar, as well as the Doubles of the offerings, which made their way to the divine dead man and thus created about him a half ideal, half real world, in which, henceforth, he was to spend his life eternal.

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[1] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 488.

[2] Tomb of Mera, Sakkarah; Plate XIII, 2.

[3] Tomb discovered by M. Loret at Sakkarah, Plate XIII, 1.

Such were the formulæ and essential proceedings of that "Ap-ro" (opening of the mouth) the first perhaps, of redemptory rituals that humanity has known. The pyramids and mastabas became sacred places, in which every dead man was to be revivified as an Osiris, a living god. There for many centuries was sung the old song, that still consoles man: "No, thou departest not dead! Living, thou goest to sit on the throne of the gods."[1]

The life of the Double in the pyramid or in any other tomb, was, the Egyptians believed, quite in line with that led before the tomb. It was the comfortable existence enjoyed by wealthy men on earth, but without the contingencies of misfortune and unhappiness, inseparable from

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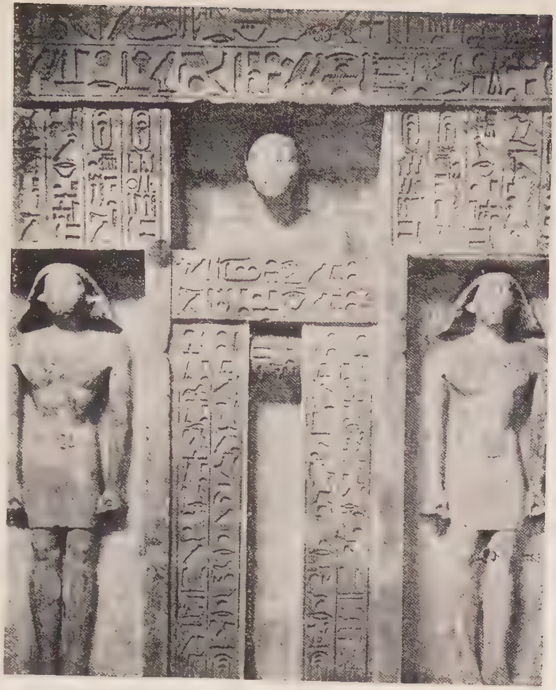
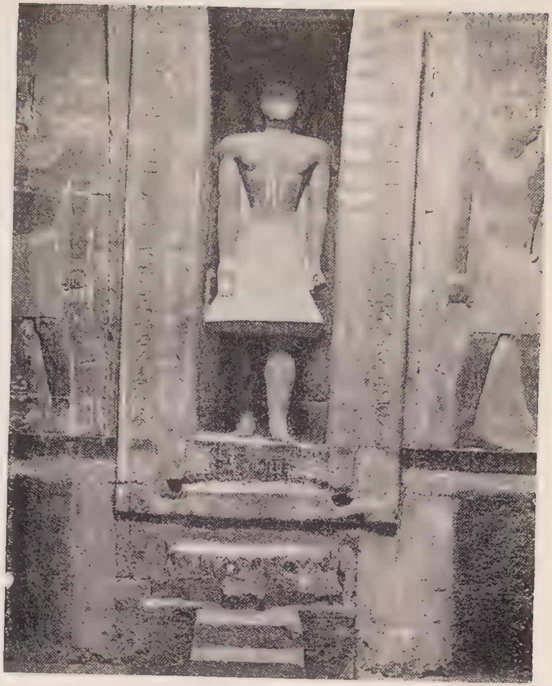
[1] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 206.



I. Stela, False Door, Bust, and Statues.



II. False Door and Statue of the Double (Merà).

Plate XIII.

human destiny. The decorators of the tomb represented the deceased seated at the table of offerings; his wife sits or stands, with her arm thrown round his shoulder; at his feet, his children play with a dog or monkey. Every one is represented at a happy moment of his existence; henceforward the Double was to know life only at its best. All around, the servants are depicted bringing food, clothing, furniture; the manufacture or production of each offering furnished a theme to the decorator. To explain the presentation of the ox's thigh, he set forth animals at pasture, the bull leaping the cow, the calf new born, and varied scenes of husbandry, up to the sacrifice of the animal; the offering of bread is accompanied by processes of ploughing, harvesting, and baking; the offering of wine gave an opportunity to reproduce the vineyards and the vintage; if the offering consisted of game, whether beast or bird, hunting-scenes in the desert were depicted; if of fish, the artist introduced fishermen with hook and nets (Plate XIV). Every piece of the funeral equipment, naos, coffin, vases, clothing, jewels, might bring about the description of the manufacturing processes; carpenters, founders, weavers, jewellers, etc.,[1] are seen at their work. Even the purchasing of provisions at market and household accounts led to a decorative commentary. The soul and the body of the deceased were supposed to be active participants in the actuality of the depicted scenes; the acts engraved on the wall might become real; every figure representing a being or an object might recruit its Double and become alive, at the wish of the god, who resided in the tomb.

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[1] Maspero, *Études égyptiennes*, i, p. 80.

This ideal of existence satisfied the Egyptians for several centuries, then lost its interest for them and seemed unsatisfactory. We can follow this evolution of ideas by reading the formulæ, changing from age to age, on the funeral stelæ. At the beginning of the IVth dynasty "goodly offerings and a goodly burial-place in the West" were the only requests addressed to the gods Anubis and Osiris, the patrons of the dead. But soon, a longing for the outside world overcame the entombed being. The Osirian rites had made a god of the dead man, and gods live in heaven. The good sepulchre, offered by the pyramid or mastaba, was expected to ensure to the soul, not only an impenetrable shelter, but also a starting-point for the journey to those celestial regions which we call Paradise. The texts of the pyramids of Sakkarah show that significant evolution already at its termination. Through what stages has the soul passed in travelling from the necropolis to heaven? The funeral stelæ furnish us an answer as yet incomplete.

As soon as we read that the defunct wishes "to wander on the lovely paths of the West,[1] where the liegemen of Osiris are wandering," it becomes evident that the soul is weary of its sepulchral seclusion. The paths of the West led to mysterious countries, where the beautiful goddess Amentit (the West) welcomed the Double with an offering of bread and water; if he ate and drank, he became the friend of the gods and went on with them. Then the defunct "traverses the fine paths accompanied by its Double; the god takes him by the hand and leads him along upon the sublime ways." Now he arrived at the frontier of heaven. Towards the East, there was a ladder; the gods held it firmly; the soul climbed up unafraid and found at the very top Horus and Set, who drew it into heaven.[2] If there was no ladder, a ship appeared, which was to conduct the soul to the celestial banks, where an obliging god facilitated the landing.[1] A third way of teaching the desired goal is exemplified when the bird-soul flies to heaven,[2] or when the ibis, Thot, takes the soul on his wings and bears it to heaven. As soon as the soul had safely arrived, the gods gave it welcome: "Open the gates of heaven," they said eagerly, "accept this Osiris among you, that he may have eternal life."[3]

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[1] This quotation and the following are taken from stelæ of the Vth and VIth dynasties.

[2] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 493; *de Pépi*, i, 191; *de Pépi*, ii, 974.

In heaven, various destinies were accorded to the Double made divine. Each destiny brings to mind a conception of Paradise, held in former times by people of this or that town, which was later more generally applied and made acceptable to all Egyptians. The most cherished was that the soul inhabited a fertile country, located by the theologians of former times on the path followed by the sun during the night. Fields, lakes, islands, villages, and summer-houses were found there; strong gates and an iron wall guarded it. It was something like the *laeta arva* of the *Æneid*, "an idealised Egypt with its Nile, its lakes, its luxuriant vegetation and over all plentiful harvests."[4] It was called *Sekhet Ialu*, "land of the

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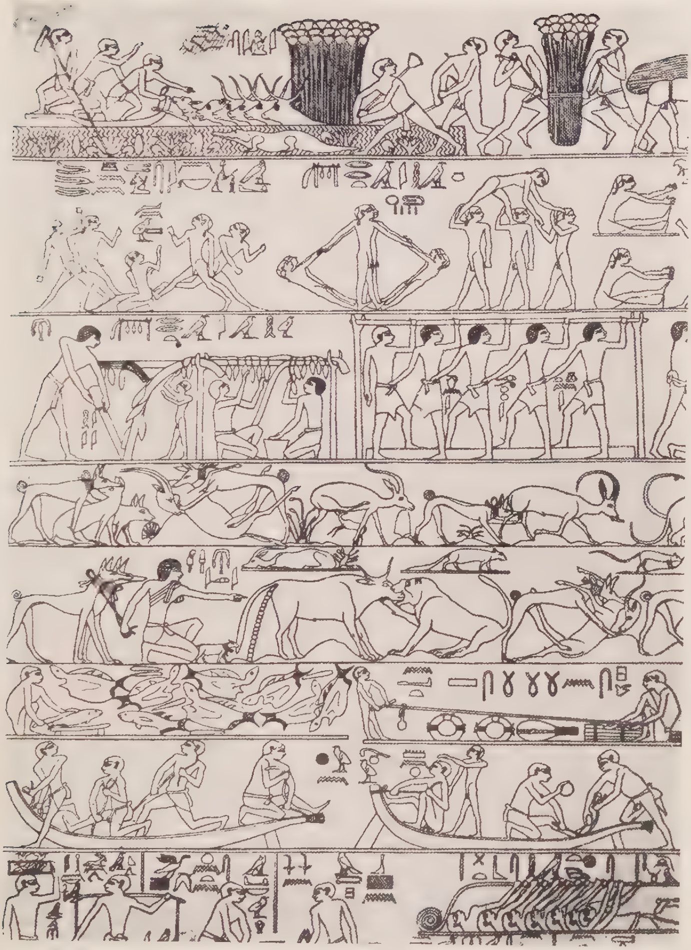
[1] *Pyramide de Pépi*, 650.
[2] *Pyramide d' Ounas*, 571.
[3] *Pryamide de Pépi*, i, 196.
[4] *Cf*. Lefébure, "Le paradis égyptien," in the Review, *Sphinx*, iii, p. 195, where are quoted the pyramidal texts relating to these conceptions of Paradise.

Sakkarah.



Bas-Reliefs of a Funeral Chamber (Phtahhetep).

Plate XIV.

reeds," in imitation of a certain region of the Delta, towards Peluze, in the ancient kingdom of Buto. At no great distance extended another Paradise, "the country of the offerings" (*Sekhet hotpu*). There destiny was still more propitious. In the fields of Ialu, the soul was to cultivate its garden; in the fields of the offerings, it found the table all set; this was due to the Doubles of the earthly offerings, which also took the heavenly road, provided they were burned or broken, thus insuring their liberation. Offerings reached the Sekhet hotpu, either along with the deceased, or in the boat which carried the Sun around the world. To sail in the solar barge, encircling with Ra the daily and nightly heaven, while managing the oars or the rigging, to be one of the crew, composed of the stellar gods, this was the most enviable, glorious, immaterial destiny. The soul to which it was accorded, left the earth joyfully, steered across the sky, like a Luminous Spirit, (Khou), among the circumpolar constellations of the North, those called the "Imperishable" (*Akhemou sekou*), because they never disappear from the visible sky. The Egyptians observed them to determine the hours, especially Ursa Major; it was said of the soul that it dwelt in the land of the hours (*Ounit*), that it "governed the night and guided the hours," thus ruling over space and time.[1]

In the following ages, these ideas furnished the Egyptians the material for subtle metaphysics and were copiously expounded in theological treatises, such as *The Book of the Dead* and *The Book of what there is in Hades*. At the time of the pyramids, however, their aspect was incomplete and rather material. What was the best, most desirable Paradise had not yet been settled: the soul preferred testing them, one after the other. That is why the wish could be formulated that the deceased might enjoy these different manifestations of Paradise, in succession or simultaneously:

> His heart has been given back to this Osiris, and when he gets to heaven, Anubis comes to meet him, Seb extends his hand to him. Thou arisest, thou perfumest thyself with incense in the lake of Hades, thou purifiest thyself with offerings in the Fields of Ialu, thou sailest in the heavens, and thou lingerest daily in the Field of Offerings, among the gods. Sit down on my throne of iron, for thou hast taken thy white mace, and thy flail, thou givest laws to the gods . . . then thou takest thy course, thou sailest about thy lake, like Ra along the banks of heaven. Arise, and pass on, Luminous Spirit.[2]

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[1] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, i, 643. *Cf.* Lefébure, "Le pays des heures," *Sphinx*, iv, p. 8.

[2] *Pyramide de Pépi*, ii, 1145 and following.

Within the course of a few centuries, the human soul had moved onward, from the humble ditch dug in the sand of the desert to the starred fields of heaven. "The soul in heaven, the body to the earth," such was the expression for life beyond the tomb, at the time of the pyramids. Yet the soul, impelled to celestial joys, retained the privilege of descending to earth, to its own tomb so propitious to material joys. In its bird-like form it flew back to the sepulchre, perched upon the trees of its domains, passed through the dumb wells leading to the coffin; now, resting on the heart of the mummy,[1] it seemed to contemplate its former earthly shape, reminding it of a time when it knew nothing as yet about sublime dwellings and the heavenly life of the gods.[2]

It has been noticed that the dead man made divine found in heaven a fraternal welcome: the gods stretched out their hands to the man coming forward; moreover, he took his seat on a throne, wielded mace and sceptre, and announced his imperative will to the gods; admitted as a brother, he played the part of master. This point is most characteristic of the religious conceptions prevalent at the time of the pyramids: man did not want to "deserve" heaven, he entered it by cunning and stayed there by force.

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[1] The bird is represented with a human head and two hands lying on the mummy's heart.

[2] After the pictures on funeral papyri.

What gave man this might, equal or even superior to that of the celestial beings? It was the powerful art of magic. Memphite Egypt was still at that stage of civilisation where man did not thoroughly differentiate his own nature from that of beings superior to himself, whom he located in heaven. In the other world, as in this one, every being possessed a body, a soul, a Double, submitted to the same good or ill luck, sensitive to the same influences; of course, the inhabitants of heaven were of more enduring essence, yet they had first to experience death in order to become *bona fide* gods; they realised eternal life only after Osiris had revealed to them the means of attaining it. Now man could also have the benefit of the Osirian rites; he considered himself, therefore, equal to those superior beings, who escaped annihilation only by virtue of the same rites; the texts of the pyramids repeat over and over again that the deceased acts and lives like a god.

Of what use was it, then, to pray to the gods? The texts of the Old Kingdom do not contain any prayer; man did not implore the gods; he asked them kindly for their help and friendly aid; having become an Osiris, he considered himself of the same blood and wanted to be received as a brother. In case the gods proved hostile, man possessed the means of destroying their resistance. Magic had taught him the secret relations of beings and of things; its laws were applicable in heaven, as well as on earth, since gods and men were of the same nature and subject to the same needs. Therefore, that Osiris with whom man identified himself, owed his resurrection to magic; ever since his mouth and eyes had been opened, he possessed the creating power of the Word and the fascinating power of the eyes. Similar to the Demiurges, who created the universe by *seeing* beings and by *naming* things, the sound of his voice called into existence all that he desired and annihilated all that he hated. When, therefore, the deceased arrived in heaven, he could boast to all comers that his power was equal or even superior to the power of any other god. By way of precaution, the priest officiating on the day of the funeral used to read an incantation, in which the deceased accosted the inhabitants of heaven and bragged that he could subdue them by terrifying threats:

> The heavens melt into water, the stars are waging war, Sagittarius goes his round, the bones of Akerou [constellations] tremble when they see Ounas eating men and feeding on gods. . . . The genii have bound the gods for Ounas, they have fettered them, they have cut their throats, emptied their entrails and cooked them in their burning kettles. It is Ounas who devours their magic and eats their spirits, and the great among them are for Ounas's repast in the morning, the medium among them are for his roast, the small among them are for Ounas's evening meal, the old among them, gods as well as goddesses, are for his furnace. . . . For Ounas is mighty among the powerful; what he finds along the road, he eats greedily, . . . he has eaten the wisdom of every god.[1]

What god would resist this all-ravaging ogre? This formidable power each man believed resident within himself, provided the rites had been faultlessly executed, and he boasted of it in his epitaphs: "I am a Luminous Spirit, initiated and well equipped, a magician who knows [the power of] his mouth!"[2] This megalomania went so far that the deceased, on meeting the supreme god, Ra, cried out: "When Pepi went to heaven, he found Ra in front of him . . . and Ra knows that Pepi is greater than he, for Pepi is more luminous than the most Luminous, more initiated than the

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[1] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 496 and following.

[2] Inscription of Hirkouf, VIth dynasty (Elephantine).

Initiates."[1] Thus the god bore the reputation of being susceptible to the terror inspired by the suggestions of a rival who "bluffed" without shame.

One may readily believe that the gods were on their guard against the dead, and implacably repulsed or even sent to the block[2] those who arrived in heaven with inadequate knowledge of magic. Woe unto the man who had not at his command the dreaded formulæ: "When men receive their burial with quantities of bread, and thousands of mugs of beer, on the table of Khontamenti, the flesh is miserable which has no script [no scroll]. . . . The script of Ounas is sealed with the great seal, and verily his script is not under the little seal."[3] On the other hand, "He who knows this chapter of Ra and executes those magic formulæ of Horus, is acceptable to Ra, he is the friend of Horus."[4] Man had no illusions. He knew that entrance into heaven would be due neither to his own merit, nor to the benevolence of the gods. "O Pepi, if thy soul is among the Luminous Spirits, it is because the fear of thee agitates their hearts[5] . . . it is because of [the power of] thy book over their hearts." Any trick against the gods was considered fair; at the beginning of the VIth dynasty, there was brought to the court a dancing dwarf of the Danga race, settled in the region of the upper Nile. This dwarf had created such a sensation among the Pharaohs that the gods in heaven were expected to be no less curious to see him, nor less kind in their welcome. That is why King Pepi does not hesitate to cheat the credulous genii, who ferry his soul over the lake of heaven: "Let me pass, says he, I am the Danga who dances before the god and rejoices the heart of Osiris." Owing to this stratagem, the soul of the king gained admission at once.[1]

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[1] *Pyramide de Pépi*, i, 91.

[2] *Pyramide de Téti*, 234.

[3] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 582.

[4] *Pyramide de Pépi*, ii, 658.

[5] *Pyramide de Pépi*, i, 20.

This Paradise, entered by force and cunning, had, however, become after centuries, the abiding place of truth and justice, to which access was obtained after the soul had victoriously stood the well-known Judgment before Osiris. The change may be noticed even at the time of the pyramids. In the very same texts, in which the power of magic is credited with so many brutal triumphs the idea was germinating that eternal life should be achieved not by force or wile but by merit. The human soul has always been intricate and divided in its aspirations. At the same time that Osiris taught men the invincible power of magic, he made manifest to them moral conscience; he himself represented not only the lucky vanquisher of death, one who accidentally escaped it, he was likewise "the god who loves justice."

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[1] Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, ii, p. 429 (*Pyramide de Pépi*, i, 400; *de Mirinri*, 570).

In the beginning, Osiris acted as judge for a very practical reason. Those who ensured, at great cost, a perpetual service of offerings to their Doubles took care to prevent robbery by calling possible robbers before the bench of the priests of Osiris, "patron of cemeteries." "If somebody should enter this tomb for an evil purpose, that is, to rob like a bird of plunder, he will be brought to judgment by the great god, master of heaven, in the place where justice is given." Beforehand, the deceased justified himself against reproaches, by making his own panegyric serve as a testimony of mortality. "I am," he said, "the beloved of my father, the darling of my mother, a man devoted to his brothers and servants; I have given food to the starving, clothes to the naked; I have been a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a support to the aged, I have enshrouded him who had no son. Never have I given cause for complaint to any one."[1] Such assertions are especially interesting from a moral point of view, but they assume here the form of an anticipated pleading before a tribunal of this world. This justification is inspired by a more generally accepted sentiment and is of deeper significance when we come across such expressions as: "I have told every day the truth the god loves."[1] The progressive development of this idea led to the conclusion that Osiris preferred the righteous and just man; the defunct would, therefore, point out that his conduct was in keeping with Osiris, for he would be the more assured of enjoying eternal life if he had lived in accordance with the dictates of justice.

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[1] Texts of the IVth and VIth dynasties.

To ascertain whether the defunct was the righteous man he professes to be, an inquest was necessary, and only after he had successfully passed this test was he to obtain access to Paradise. Thus originated the idea of a Judgment of the dead, conducted by the gods of the Osiride family. Messrs. Erman and Lefébure[2] have pointed out the distinctive interest attached to certain very short texts, found in the pyramids, where the idea of judgment is merely mentioned but not yet developed. "Ounas possesses creative power commensurate with his doings.[1] Tefen and Tefnouit examine him; Maït (the truth) listens to him; Shu stands as witness; Maït decrees that he may wander all over the world and go where he likes. . . . Ounas comes forth to-day as a living soul. Justice is what he takes along with him."[2] Thus the magic power of the creating Word was made dependent in Ounas's case on the merit of his actions. Of course it must always be remembered that a magic formula, appropriately introduced, could affect the balance of the scales of justice in favour of the defunct, should his conscience prove too heavy for him to be admitted to the other world. It is true, nevertheless, that from that time truth held a higher place in the estimation of the Egyptians. In the Theban period are found, in the liturgic books, the following words of a truly Biblical character in reference to men called to live in Paradise: "Those who have practised justice when on earth are called to the abode of the Joy of the World, the palace where one lives by Justice."

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[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, ii, 81.

[2] *Ægyptische Zeitschrift*, 1893, p. 75.

Why should we be surprised that the men who were first confronted with religious problems should have entertained such contradictory ideas about Ethics and Magic, about will and conscience? After thousands of years, men are still divided on the same questions. Similar antimonies draw us nearer to the contemporaries of the Pharaohs, instead of separating us from them.

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[1] *Sphinx*, viii, p. 34.

[2] *Pyramide d'Ounas*, 453.

Such general ideas about the meaning of life, the purpose of the universe and of man were in process of formation in Egypt during the fourth millennium before our era. We may apply to Egypt what Fustel de Coulanges said after his study of primitive civilisations among the Indo-European people: "Perhaps it was at the sight of death that man conceived, for the first time, the idea of the supernatural, and entertained the hope that there might be something beyond that which was visible. Death was the first mystery and opened to him the way to the other mysteries. Death raised his thought from the visible to the invisible, from what is transitory to what is eternal, from the human to the divine."[1]

Such men as Cheops and Pepi knew how to give to the conceptions of their contemporaries a tangible and everlasting form, in erecting the pyramids, or citadels, which, with all their mighty weight, protected the bodies, and with their formidable height aspired to reach the sky. Herodotus speaks of these kings as tyrants who crushed their people in order to build vainglorious tombs, monuments of pride and egoism. Such a viewpoint is not supported by fact. In the eyes of their contemporaries, the Pharaohs were rather benefactors, who put great ideas into tangible form and enabled a whole nation to conquer Paradise. They could not have carried on their labours during several centuries and achieved such colossal results had they not been supported by popular enthusiasm, similar to that, which, less than nine centuries ago, promoted the construction of the European cathedrals. The beautiful lines of Sully Prudhomme describe a mason who died, despised, while building the pyramid and crying out in vain:

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[1] *La Cité antique*, chap. ii.

Il monte, il va, cherchant les dieux et la justice. . . .
(" He climbs, he mounts, seeking gods and justice. . . .")

Yet, this is not the complaint of a victim, it is the clamour of a whole primitive nation, a cry of hope, of fear, of will, rejoicing that a way to heaven has been forced open by the triangular apex of the pyramid.

CHAPTER V

"THE BOOK OF THE DEAD"

IN the time of the pyramids (4000 B.C.), the Pharaohs in Memphis had already a complete system of philosophy relative to the hereafter; but only the members of their family and their favourites shared with them the privilege of immortality; it was necessary to be a "friend of the King" to enjoy a tomb consecrated by those mortuary rites which assured life everlasting. After a few centuries, however, we see the redemptive doctrines extended from the narrow circle of the court to the entire Egyptian society. Such funeral texts as had been used exclusively for the kings of the VIth dynasty (three thousand years before our era), were more generally applied and are found engraved in the tombs or on the coffins of ordinary citizens.

A paradise which all might attain, bestowed so unexpectedly, gave rise to anxieties unknown before. The honour of obtaining divine life, of being identified with Osiris, the god of life and death, was rather dangerous. The Osirian deceased partook of the peril as well as the glory of the Good Being; he was confronted by the attacks of all the enemies of Osiris and was beset by the wiles of the wicked. It became necessary to protect him, to shield his body, and endow his soul with magic defence; hence the mummification of innumerable corpses and the countless papyrus-scrolls, called *The Book of the Dead*, laid near them for their protection, in every Egyptian necropolis.

The problem of preserving the body from decomposition had been easily solved by the embalmers; Herodotus[1] describes them at work thus:

> First, they draw the brains through the nostrils, partly by means of a bent iron, partly by means of drugs introduced in their heads. Next, they make an incision in the stomach with a sharp Ethiopian stone; through this opening they draw the intestines, clean them and pass them through palm-wine, then again through aromatic substances; next, they fill the stomach with myrrh, cinnamon and other perfumes, then sew it up again. This done, they put the corpse in salt, and cover it with natron for seventy days. At the end of this period, they wash the body and swathe it in linen bandages.

An examination of the mummies shows that the

[1] II., 86.

many swathing-bands were, indeed, a kind of protective armour. After the body had been anointed with holy oil, the cavities of stomach and abdomen were filled not only with aromatic substances but also with statuettes and amulets. A wax plate, stamped with a symbolic eye, was used to protect the wound in the side. The face and fingers were gilded, so that the virtue of the indestructible metal might enter the body. On the breast, a heart-shaped figure marked the seat of the soul; scarab, hawk, and uræus were meant to protect the trunk and forehead; all over and along the body little figures were stationed, like vigilant sentinels. Linen pads were then placed over the body to give symmetry to the contours, and a second wrapping, loose or tight, fashioned the head, bust, and legs. A large shroud, fastened with a piece of linen, bound the forehead, and, crossing over the chest, was adorned with a figure of Osiris worshipped by the deceased.

This equipment, however, afforded no protection until the priests had recited certain formulæ. There is a "ritual of embalming" telling us about the name, use, and prophylactic properties of every bandage and of every statuette. Properly interpreted these various articles are not linen, statues, or spices: they are living gods, Isis, Nephthys, Horus, Thot, who, under the appearance of oil, swathing, and amulets, surround the mummy with their arms, defend it with their bodies and with all their supernatural strength.

As a means of defence, this corpse, inhabited by the gods, had the formulæ engraved on the walls or along the sides of the sarcophagus; the lines of inscriptions were arranged so that the eyes of the mummy might read them easily. During the era of the New Theban Kingdom (about 1500 B.C.), when the coffins, being adapted exactly to the contours of the mummy, took on the "anthropoid" shape, the decorator no longer found a space suitable for inscribing the verses of the ritual. There was, therefore, slipped into the cardboard sarcophagus a roll of papyrus containing a more or less complete collection of the necessary texts. The substitution in turn of the coffin for the tomb, then of the papyrus for the coffin thus afforded rich and poor alike, the benefit of the formulæ of salvation. This *Book of the Dead* is found by the thousands deposited near the mummies.

Now, in the course of the three thousand years which separated the Theban coffins from the Ptolemaic papyri, the make-up of such collections varied just as much as their outward form. The first collection known, that of the pyramids, comprises four hundred and fifty-three chapters. Only a few of them were transcribed in the Theban period, and, out of the newer texts written on the coffins, many enjoyed but a passing vogue and are not to be met again in the papyri. About the time of the Psamteks (600 B.C.), the Egyptians perceived the necessity of arranging these sacred texts in some definite order; a choice was made of one hundred and sixty-five chapters, classified in an arbitrary manner, which was followed, nevertheless, by the later copyists. The best copy of this revised edition is a papyrus, twenty-one yards long, preserved in the Museum of Turin and published by Lepsius. The chapters are arranged in vertical lines with headings carefully indicated in red ink, and with delicately traced ornamentations in black or coloured outlines, serving as a commentary on the text.

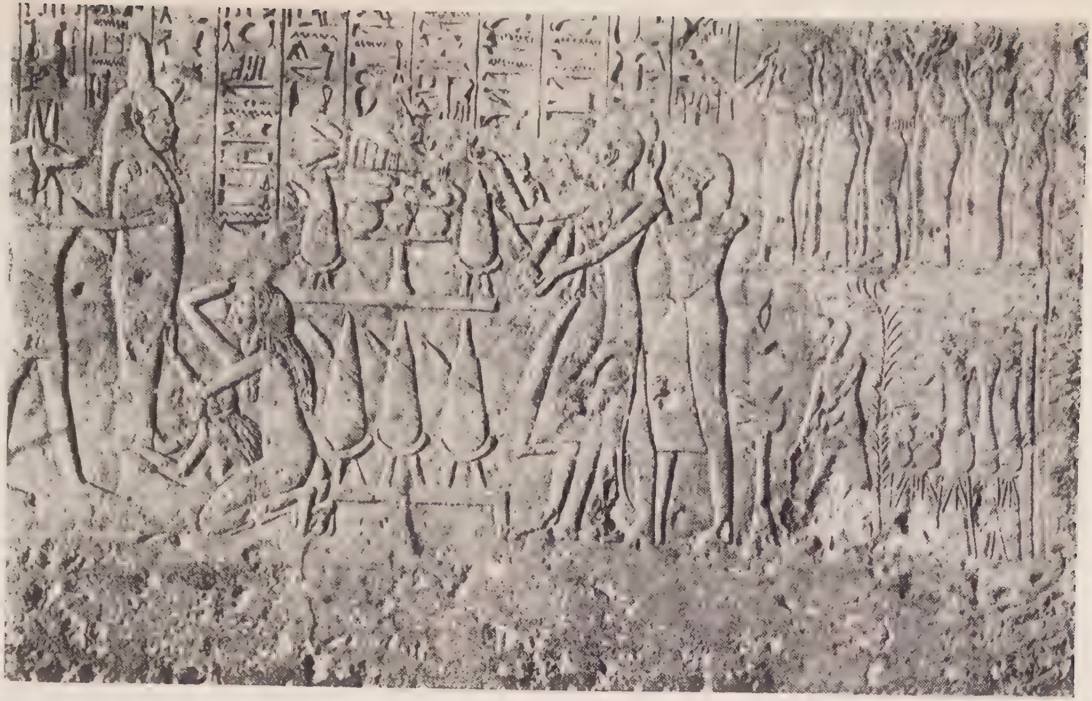
Such a book could not be dispensed with as the dead had to recite it in order to obtain eternal life. The undertakers had it for sale, in complete or abridged copies, with or without the ornamental vignettes, ready for use; as the name of the dead had to be repeated in each chapter, a blank space was left for its insertion by the purchaser. Most of these cheap editions are quite incorrect: the words are badly spelled or have been carelessly transcribed; some sentences have been omitted, others are repeated; there is a want of precision. These blunders prove that the copyist did not understand this very ancient ritual. The sacred books, indeed, teem with allusions to mythical events, with names that are unusual and figures that need quite a commentary to be properly interpreted. These enigmas puzzled the theologians of the Theban period as much as they puzzled us. They added to the text annotations, often contradictory, which the scribes copied haphazardly. It is interesting for us to see the priests thus at work in an attempt to interpret the texts of a hoary age, texts which were already corrupted.

The texts in the pyramids teach the rites that redeem man from death and ensure his continuance of life in the grave and in heaven. They do not give directions how to find the right way to paradise, how to overcome foes and obstacles, and how to stand the test of the Last Judgment. Sage advice and practical information about this matter was to be gathered from the different chapters of *The Book.* The man who knew the formulæ, when in the flesh, had nothing to dread after death. "He who *sayeth* this chapter and who hath been purified in water of natron, he shall come forth by day, after his burial; he shall accomplish all the transformations his heart suggests to him, he shall come forth from every fire, in sooth."[1] But the placing of the salvation text on the mummy was sufficient: "Chapter to be written, with sticky ink and in colour, on a roll of royal papyrus, to be suspended about the mummy on the day of burial. With this talisman round his neck, the defunct is among the gods . . . he is a god for ever."[2] As a rule the defunct himself was supposed to speak, to recite the text, and to fight against his enemies. Yet it was considered sufficient to insure the mummy from running any risk whatever if the priest read, at the time of the funeral, from a copy of *The Book.* Woe unto the unwise man who was buried without *The Book!* "He who *knoweth* not this chapter cannot come forth by day."[3]

The Book of the Dead is divided into four parts. The last is a hodge-podge of all sorts of magical prescriptions; the first three parts guide the defunct from earth to heaven, by various ways and by means of diverse doctrines. As a compilation of that sort must necessarily be incoherent, there was placed at the beginning of the three

[1] Chap. XX. [2] Chap. CI. [3] Chap. LXXXVI.

Tomb of Phtahnefer.



Cliché of E. Brugsch.

The Funeral Ceremony.

Plate XV.

divisions a synthetic chapter, the Ist, XVIIth, and LXIVth, where is found a symbolic explanation of the destinies of the soul and, as it were, a summary of *The Book*.

First Part.

Above the chapters from I to XVI, the vignettes depict the funeral. Priests and mourning-women are represented with appropriate gestures around the sarcophagus; the procession, ready to cross the Nile, is getting into the bark pell-mell with the offerings, the animals which are to be sacrificed, and the mummy. When all have arrived before the tomb, the mummy is set up on a heap of sand and the bull is cut up; a priest, wearing as a mask a dog's head, plays the part of Anubis, and opens the mouth of the defunct, while repeating the rites which will make of him a living god. On the other side of the coffin, the deceased is now seen resuscitated, freed from his wrappings; he bends his knee before Ra and gets into the celestial bark.

The heading of Chapter I implies, indeed, that it was to be recited on the day of the funeral. To be well received by Osiris, the defunct declared boldly that he was Thot, Horus, or one of those who had fought for the god, when his body torn to pieces had to be snatched from the typhons. The defunct also asserted that he filled different priestly offices: he had gone through all the degrees of initiation; his purity and holiness were evident; on the day of judgment "no sin of his was found in the balance"; he will, therefore, enter the gates of paradise and sit at the table of the gods. In these texts, as in those of the pyramids, the defunct tried to abuse the gods with impudent declarations. The recital of the following chapters enabled the defunct to live after death; to travel over the earth, the region of cemeteries (the Amenti), and heaven, without being stopped by his enemies; as for the serpent, Apophis, its cunning could be baffled by the spell of a wax figure, and it was finally stamped under the feet of the victorious soul. As a conclusion, the soul intoned a hymn to Ra: "I have come unto the land of Eternity; . . . I steer my way across the sky. . . . Hail to thee, Father of the gods, may thy radiant face be favourable unto me!"

Second Part.

Now we are at the gates of the other world. Chapter XVII, the most important of the whole collection, introduces the second part. The vignette shows us the defunct in company with the great gods. The text assumes the ambitious task of "resuscitating the spirits." Speaking, himself, as he does in Chapter I, the defunct boasts that he is the Creator of the Universe under his manifold aspects; he reveals to us the origin of the world, also man's destiny, leading him from earth towards heaven, provided that the good and the right triumph in him on the day of the Last Judgment. Each sentence in this chapter is first presented in a concise, summarised form. In some coffins of the XIth dynasty, such condensed formulæ are given without any further development; but even in this remote period, the literal meaning of the words was beyond the intelligence of the common people; the theologians had to append to each clause of the sentence a commentary, in the form of questions and answers. This glossary was sometimes found obscure, and required a second and even a third explanation; it is in this triple equipment of critical commentary that the Saïte Recension has kept for us the XVIIth chapter.

The deceased, now informed about the mysteries, musters all his energy for future combats and for the great test of judgment. He entreats Thot to grant him the magic voice that sounds right, speaks true, and destroys error; this power shall be his own if "the crown of creative voice" is placed upon his head. Meanwhile, the gods open his mouth with the sacred implement of iron, by which Osiris's eyes and mouth were forced open; one by one, magic charms, conscience, will, and heart are given him. A battle must be fought immediately against the typhonic animals, crocodiles, serpents, tortoises, and red asses, which seek to devour the "magic" of the deceased, in order to overcome and annihilate him; but he brandishes his spear and thrusts it at the crocodiles, which pitifully turn away their heads. He nails tortoises and serpents to the ground and pierces the reptiles even when they have taken refuge on the back of the ass. To fight against the monsters he uses deceit; for instance, he shouts to the crocodile: "Get thee back, crocodile, for I live by reason of the magical words which I have by me; that which thou hatest is in my belly; I have eaten Osiris's neck; I am Set." Elsewhere, he must assert just the contrary: "I am Ra, I am Osiris," and he also boasts that each part of his body is a living god, able to defend himself: "There is not one of his limbs that is not a god . . . he cannot be seized by the arm, nor held back by the hands; neither men nor gods, nor shades, nor the dead, no one can do him violence."[1] He escapes, also, from those who attempt to cut off his head or to poison him with filth: "That which is an abomination unto me, I do not eat; the abomination is filth; I do not eat filth; I live upon bread and beer."[2]

Now the end of the ordeal approaches: Toum appears, carrying in his hand the inflated sail, symbolic of the breath of life; Nouît, the fair goddess of the sycamore, comes forth from the tree to offer him bread and water: "O thou, sycamore tree of Nouît," cries out the deceased, "grant me the water which dwelleth in thee," and after receiving his libation, he says: "I open the gates of heaven, I have passed through the doors of the earth."

Third Part.

Chapter LXIV, at the beginning of the third part, claims to give "in a single chapter the rites of coming forth by day"; it is an attempt at synthesis, probably recent. There are found, in more obscure form and without explanatory comment, the general ideas already expounded in Chapter XVII: the origin of the Universe; the destiny of man. "Stretch out your arms unto me, ye gods, who have proceeded from my mouth,"

[1] Chap. XLII.

[2] Chap. LII.

cries out the deceased; "I rise again whole; I soar to the sky, I hover above the earth. . . . I have entered the sanctuary, I come forth a Luminary, I shall look upon the forms of men for ever. He who knoweth this chapter, he possesseth the creative voice upon earth and in the other world; he taketh on all the forms of the living. This chapter was found in Hermopolis upon a block of iron and of alabaster inscribed in letters of lapis, under the feet of the god (Thot), in the time of King Mycerinus, by the royal prince Hordidiff, when he was journeying about to make an inspection of the temples; it contained a hymn that put the prince in ecstasy. He brought it to the King with rapture, as soon as he had knowledge of this great mystery. . . ."

The thing that Thot revealed to men through the agency of a holy man in rapture was the possibility of "coming forth by day," *i.e.*, of living again, after death, all the forms of life. The gates of heaven and earth were opened to the deceased; we see him proceeding on his way and, with a gold walking-stick in his hand, wandering among gods and men. A series of very old chapters[1] has preserved for us the names of a cycle of popular divinities whose forms the deceased liked to assume. Such divinities were typified by animals, the hawk, the phenix, the heron, the swallow, the goose, the serpent, and the crocodile; also by plants, like the lotus flower. To live again under these forms was tantamount to identifying oneself with the local gods; the latter, indeed, filled the place once occupied by the totemic animals of primitive Egypt. Possibly we have here a conception of the remotest antiquity, antedating by many years, the solar and Osirian theories;[1] the future life, according to this conception, is still nothing more than a metempsychosis, a migration of the soul into beings and things. But soon *The Book* brings us back to divinities of more recent time.

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[1] Chaps. LXXVI–LXXXVIII.

In addressing the gods of Heliopolis and Abydos, the deceased no longer conceives of the future life as a migration into a divine form: he reverts to the more human ideal of paradise, to the conception of a life lived in the rich, luxuriant meadows of the Elysian Fields. Owing to the help of Thot and Anubis, he does not mistake his way; now, we see him on the bank of the infernal river: he finds there a boat ready to take him over; yet the Egyptian Charon, sitting at the rudder, and the boat itself ask him questions; if he can tell the names of the god and of each part of the skiff, he will prove by his answers that he knows the formulæ necessary for his salvation:

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[1] *Cf.* Wiedeman, "Quelques remarques sur le culte des animaux en Égypte," ap. *Museon*, 1905 p. 123.

"O thou guardian of the mysterious boat, I hasten, I hasten, I come to see my father Osiris."

"Tell me my name," saith the Hull.

"Darkness is thy name."

"Tell me my name," saith the Mast.

"He who leadeth the great goddess on her way is thy name."

"Tell me my name," saith the Sail.

"Nouît (the heaven) is thy name. . . ."

"He who knows this chapter, he shall enter the Elysian Fields; bread and beverages shall be given unto him, and he shall eat of the barley and wheat, seven cubits high, which the servants of Horus shall reap for him . . . and he shall come forth from the Elysian Fields in any form he pleaseth."[1]

After an invocation to the Spirits of the East and of the West, the deceased enters paradise; the vignettes show us its fertile fields, still unploughed or covered with huge crops; a river is winding through them and sunlight and water, spreading over them, effectually fertilise the soil.[2]

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[1] Chap. XCIX.

[2] Chap. CX.

There is no longer any reptile there, nor any dangerous fish, nor anything to be dreaded. The chosen ones "were sitting down peacefully on the bank of the water, in the shade of the tall, evergreen trees, and they breathed the cool breeze of the North. They fished with the line among the lotus flowers, they got in a boat and had their servants tow them along; or, sometimes, they deigned to paddle themselves and they drifted about, slowly, on the canals; they hunted the birds in the thickets, or retired under their painted kiosks to read stories, or play draughts, or meet their wives ever young and ever fair."[1]

According to the oldest beliefs, the dead gave some of his leisure to work: he would hold the arms of the plough drawn by two oxen, cut the wheat with the scythe, and pluck the stalks of flax by handfuls. But soon, a formula of *The Book* rendered it unnecessary for him to do any task; it had to be placed on one of those statuettes of wood or glazed earth that are found by the thousands in every necropolis. They represent a man standing, his body compressed in a mummy sheath, his hands placed against his breast.

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[1] Maspero, *Histoire*, i, p. 194, according to the vignettes in *The Book of the Dead.*

Taking the posture of a soldier with his piece at port arms, he holds the hoe, the spade, and bag of seeds, that are the invariable accompaniments of field-labour. These statuettes were supposed to represent the servants that any man, even the poorest, might summon in the next world; they were called "answerers" (*oushaibtiou*) because they answered the biddings of the deceased: "O thou, answerer, if thou be called in the service of the Osiris N . . . , to do any task connected with the labours which are to be undertaken in the underworld, such as tilling the fields, filling the water-courses, bringing the sand from the East to the West, (answer): 'I am here, I am here.'"[1]

In former times, during the Memphite period, access to paradise and all its material joys was granted to any one, good or bad, who knew the formulæ. Later, the destiny of man was made dependent upon his morality. Therefore, in the following chapters, the deceased proceeds towards Abydos, knocking at the door of the realm of Justice, and coming before the assessors of Osiris to confess the purity of his conscience: "I have come, as a perfect shade, to cause Justice to rise toward him who loves it."[2] He then enters "the Hall of Double Justice, where man separates himself from his sins, that he may behold the faces of the gods."

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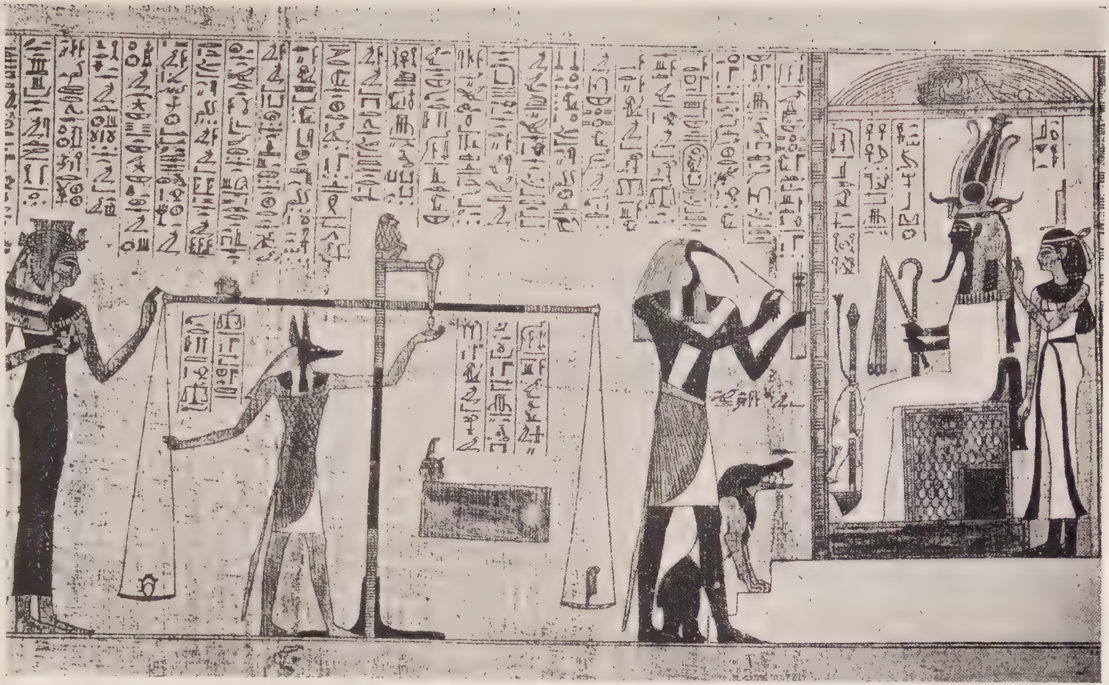
[1] Chap. VI.

[2] Chap. CXXIV.

Such is the heading of the well-known Chapter CXXV, which like Chapter XVII is of transcendent importance. In it the destiny of men is directed towards paradise or hell, in accordance with their merits. The deceased kisses the earth at the threshold of the Judgment Hall. At the end of the Hall, Osiris, the Good Being, the Redeemer and Redresser, seated in a shrine guarded by a frieze of uræi, awaits his son "who comes from the earth." In the centre stands a great balance; close by stands Maït, the Lady of Right and Truth, who is ready to weigh the heart of the deceased. Not far away a hideous beast, half crocodile and half hippopotamus, Amaït, the Eater, turns its jaws toward Osiris, as if to ask permission to devour the newcomer. All around the Hall, crouching on their heels in Oriental fashion, are forty-two divinities, draped in their shrouds. It is a jury representing the forty-two provinces of Egypt, chosen to judge the deceased. The latter presents a humble petition: he comes to justify himself of the forty-two canonical sins; each member of the jury deals with one sin and typifies the chastisement of it. "Hail to ye, Masters of Justice, hail to thee, Great God, Master of Right and Truth! I have come to thee, my Lord, I am brought before thee to view thy beauty! For I know thee, I know thy name, I know the names of all the forty-two divinities who are with thee in the Hall of the Two Truths, living upon the torn bodies of sinners, revelling in their blood, on the day when account is rendered of the lives of men before the Good Being. I am bringing Truth and I have destroyed my sins for you."

There follows an enumeration of the sins which the deceased denies having committed; this "Negative Confession" represents a code of morals. The deceased makes first a general and impersonal sketch of the situation; then justifies himself before each Judge:

I have not done ill; I have perpetrated no violence; I have not committed theft; I have not caused a man to be slain deceitfully; I have not purloined the offerings (of the gods); I have not uttered a falsehood; I have not made (any man) weep; I have not been impure; I have not slain the sacred animals; I have not damaged lands which were ploughed; I have not been a slanderer; I have not been given to outbursts of anger; I have not committed adultery; I have not turned a deaf ear to words of truth; I have not practised magic against the king or against my father; I have not defiled the water; I have not caused the slave to be ill-treated by his master; I



Cliché of E. Brugsch

The Judgment of the Dead (from a papyrus).

Plate XVI.

have not sworn (in vain); I have not made false the beam of the balance; I have not taken away the milk from the mouth of children; I have not snared the birds of the gods; I have not forced back the water in its time (when it should flow); I have not cut off a channel (in its course); I have not extinguished a fire, in its time (when it should burn); I have not scorned God in my heart. I am pure, I am pure, I am pure!

The case was decided, for Thot and Anubis had tested the balance, putting in one of the scales the heart of the deceased, in the other a figure of Truth; the poise of the two pans vouched for the sincerity of the confession. Thot wrote on his tablets the result of the weighing and said to Osiris: "The deceased has been weighed in the balance; there is no wrong in him; his heart is in accordance with Truth, the balance is exact; there is no doubt, all his members are perfect." Osiris pronounced his sentence; the latter is sometimes found in the tombs, transcribed on tablets as an authentic document: "The deceased may retire triumphantly, to go wheresoever he pleaseth, by the spirits and the gods. He shall not be repulsed by the guardians of the gates of the West" (Plate XVI).

He will not suffer punishment "who possesseth this chapter inscribed on a brick of pure clay, taken from a field upon which no team has trodden." Yet, the next chapter brings the deceased, thus justified, before a lake of fire, guarded by four dog-headed apes: "O those four apes, who judge the poor as well as the rich, and who feed on truth, destroy every fault in me, annihilate my sins." "We destroy thy faults, we annihilate thy sins," answer the guardians of the fire. Is this lake of fire a kind of purgatory, an antechamber to the abode of the just?

Having stood the test victoriously, the deceased has become the equal of the gods of Abydos or Heliopolis; his voice prevails wherever he be, for it utters the Truth; "order is given that he may undergo his transformations."[1] Therefore, he "passes through the gates of heaven, of earth and of the underworld, like the soul of Ra." He may at will choose his destiny; he may go into the solar barge, where he becomes Ra incarnated, "for the double of the god has been joined to him whom he loves."[2] He may also take his place in the Osirian paradise. He has to learn the names of all the gods, his brothers (Osiris alone possessed about a hundred names which people recited in litanies), also the names of the seven halls of paradise, of the fourteen gates, of the fourteen dwellings, as well as the names of their guardians. He who knows the names of things and of beings possesses their secret and has control over them. Having now the key to the supreme mysteries, the deceased has knowledge of everything that a god should know; he feels himself to be one of the divine family: "the gods surround him and appreciate him, for he is like one of them."[1]

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[1] Chap. CXXVIII.

[2] Chap. CXXXIII.

Now that we have given a brief outline of *The Book*, let us try to penetrate into the mysteries which the Egyptian priests were so proud of teaching, and the knowledge of which made man like unto the gods. "Your eyes shall be opened," says the serpent in *Genesis*, "ye shall be like unto the gods, knowing good and evil."

The Book of the Dead is not, according to the usual definition, merely a guide for the traveller to the next world, or a manual of the perfect dead; its purpose is to give the key to the essential problems, concerning gods and men, and to meet the wishes of the devout souls who "hunger for religious belief, are curious about their origin, and full of anxiety concerning their own destiny."[2] Whence does man come and whither does he go?—this is the fundamental question that *The Book* attempts to answer; in this respect, the two most important parts of *The Book* are Chapters XVII and CXXV; the one is the Genesis, the other the Gospel of the Egyptian Holy Scriptures. They contained secrets not to be revealed; they were transmitted from father to son as rites of the family cult, but with what precaution! "Thou shalt not allow these chapters to be seen by any man except thyself, thy father or thy son . . ."[1] "Let this be known by no one, except thyself . . ."[2] "This is a real mystery known by no man, in any place . . ."[3] "This book is the greatest of mysteries. Thou shalt not allow any man to see it. It is an abomination to make it known;[4] . . . take good heed that it be not seen, except by thyself for him who taught it thee."[5]

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[1] Chap. CXLVIII.

[2] De Rougé: *Études sur le Rituel funéraire*, 1860.

How was the Universe created? This question soon finds its way to the lips of children, and it framed itself upon the lips of men in the childhood of the race. "This book shall let thee know what happened at the beginning."[6]

At the beginning of the world, nothing existed but the abyss of primordial Water, the Nu. In that time, according to the texts in the pyramids,

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[1] Chap. CXXXIII.

[2] Chaps. CXXVI, CXLIV, CLXVIII.

[3] Chap. CLXI. [4] Chap. LXII. [5] Chap. XLVIII.

[6] Chap. CXLVIII.

"there were as yet, no heaven, no earth, no men; the gods were not yet born, there was as yet no death."[1] In the water floated the Spirit of the primeval god, Toum; he bore within him the power of generating things and beings. Toum passed from inertia to action by emitting the one phrase: "Come to me;"[2] then Toum created the sun, Ra, out of himself, and sent him forth from him. Are then Toum and Ra father and son? No; the two together form one person; "for the god is an indivisible monad, bearing within itself the power of generating its own existence."[3]

In brief, at the dawn of time, there sounded the creative Word, and there was Light. The theologians agreed upon the basis of this doctrine, but the name of the Creator was in dispute: it is to Osiris that the priests of Abydos attributed the "Come to me," prelude of creation; the priesthood of Heliopolis boasted that it was Toum who uttered it. For the common folk, the difficulty was to understand how Light could have existed in an inert state, in the water of Nu, without being extinguished by the water. This difficulty was overcome by means of allegories: Ra in the

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[1] *Pyramide de Pépi*, i, 663.

[2] In *The Book of the Dead*, the day of creation is called "Day of come to me."

[3] Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie*.

Nu was a hawk, with both eyes closed; when he opened them the sun shone; or, he was a child hidden in a lotus flower; when the flower came out, the sun rose from it.

Toum-Ra organised Chaos; he sent forth from himself, without feminine co-operation, two elements, air and fire, under the form of a couple of different sex, Shou and Tafnouît. Another couple, Seb and Nouît, personified earth and heaven, placed one above the other; the air, Shou, slipping between them, separated the goddess, Heaven, from her husband, Earth. Cruel parting: if heaven surrounds earth on all sides, it is because the arms and legs of the goddess still touch earth; Shou persists in holding up the starry body, in the position later assumed by Atlas bearing heaven. If earth shows a distorted surface, it is because Seb tries to struggle against Shou; he raises himself on one elbow and bends one knee, but remains petrified in this attitude. From heaven and earth were born Osiris and Isis (water and fecundated earth), Set and Nephthys, (the barren ground of the desert); the antagonism between fertile earth and desert found its expression in the myth of Osiris and Set struggling against each other, like good and evil. Those first four couples, who begat the other gods, formed, with Toum, "the great Eunead, or Nine (gods), which is in Heliopolis"; *The Book* sums up this theory by saying that Toum-Ra "transformed the inert into eight gods," by drawing out of Chaos eight elements, until that time inactive and confused.[1] Now, the great mystery revealed to the dead is this: man is also a divine substance; he is, like the gods, an emanation from Ra; at the time of creation, he flowed, as a tear, from the eyes of the Creator, whereas the gods went forth from mouth. Along with man, all matter was emitted from the divine eye, proceeding, as it were, from Light. Nothing existed in the Universe until the Creator *saw* beings and things and *named* them. O thou who didst reveal thyself for the first time, when no god existed, when the name of no thing was as yet known. . . . When thou didst open thy two eyes and didst see with them, there was Light for everybody. . . . O god, thou who begettest gods, men and things!"

The whole world is part of the divinity: "Thou art the heaven, the earth, the water, the air and they who dwell therein." The world is but the form of the divine spirit: "Ra coming forth from the Nu, it is the god-soul creating matter, that is to say, its own body."[1]

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[1] *The Book of the Dead,* Chap. XVII, Naville's interpretation.

If the Universe is but the body of the divine soul, the deceased, to whom this secret is revealed, becomes aware of his real nature. A particle of the divine whole, endowed with soul and body, in the image of his Creator, he sums up in himself all that exists. The past hides nothing, the future promises nothing that is not already in him. It is not a mere lesson in theology that the initiated reads in Chapter XVII of *The Book;* he lifts with enthusiasm the veil of appearances and proclaims the revelation of his true nature.

> I am Toum, he who existed alone in the Nu; I am Ra, when he rises in the beginning to govern what he has created. . . . I am the Great God, who gave shape to himself, that is to say, the Nu, the father of the gods.
>
> *Who is that?*
>
> (Comment): That is Ra, the maker of his own limbs, that become the gods in the retinue of Ra.
>
> I am Yesterday and I know To-morrow.
>
> *What is that?*
>
> (Comment): Yesterday is Osiris (death); To-morrow is Ra (the future).
>
> I am this great Bennon (Heron), who is in Heliopolis; I am the law of the existence and of the beings.
>
> *Who is that?*
>
> (Comment): The Bennon is Osiris in Heliopolis.

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[1] *The Book of the Dead*, Chap. XVII, papyrus of Soutimes.

The law of the existence and of the beings is his body; or in other words, it is the infinite duration of time and eternity. The infinite duration of time is the daytime, eternity is the night.

What proportion of these symbols did the ordinary Egyptian understand? If the initiated alone were capable of realising the pantheistic explanation of the Universe (divine matter produced of itself, and divine throughout), the ignorant, at least, knew that man descended from the gods; his divine origin ruled his destiny.

To live upon earth, then to die in order to become a god again—such was the present condition of all the beings emanating from the Creator. This destiny implies so many sorrows that common people could not be expected to understand why the descendants of Toum were doomed, by some caprice of their father, to undergo that unfortunate experience, an earthly life. The priests, who receive the divine revelations, taught their brethren that the earth, in its prime, "in the time of god Ra," was an Eden of perfect happiness. Man, whose name in Egyptian is Tem, was made in the image of Toum, who is always represented in human form. Toum, also called Atoum, is, therefore, *man par excellence*, These circumstances recall those pertinent to the Biblical Adam, whose name also means the first man, as well as man in general.[1] How, then, could the living image of the Creator be condemned to a life full of affliction? Oriental lore found a satisfactory explanation: man, intoxicated with his liberty and eager for knowledge, revolted against his Father; he was urged by the serpent and the woman.

A similar tradition can be traced in Egypt. M. Lefébure, who made eminent contributions to this subject, has pointed out the similarity between the story of Adam in paradise and a scene from the underworld reproduced in the tomb of Ramses VI, (about 1200 B.C.), and on a Saïte coffin in the Louvre. "A virile personage is standing before a serpent, with two legs and two arms, who offers him a red fruit, or at least a little, round thing, painted red."[2] The tree of life and knowledge is well known in Egypt; in one of the oldest chapters of *The Book*, the chapter "giving to the dead divine knowledge," the deceased is invited to rest like a bird upon the beautiful sycamore tree, bearing the fruit of life: "whosoever standeth under the tree is a god." In either case, the relation between the above facts and the revolt of man against his Creator is not explained; but the revolt was for the Egyptians an indisputable fact. An account of it has come down to us in the tombs of the Theban kings (1500–1200 B.C.). It was about the end of the reign of Ra; the god called into council his first-born, Shou and Tafnouît, Seb and Nouît, and said to them: "Behold, the men who were born of me, speak evil words against me. Tell me what you will do in this matter. I have waited and I have not killed them before hearing you." The council approved of destroying all the living; Ra entrusted his daughter, Hathor, with this duty; for several days she slaughtered men and stamped in their blood; drunk with carnage, she would have exterminated everything living, when the god, overcome with pity, interfered by means of a stratagem. Seven thousand jars were filled with mandrake, macerated in the blood of men; the liquor was spread over the fields and turned the goddess from her intent; "she drank to satiety and no longer perceived the men." A few survivors of mankind came then to the

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[1] Lefébure, "Le Cham et l'Adam égyptiens;" ap. *Proceedings of Society of Biblical Archæology*, 1893.

[2] Ed. Naville: "La destruction des hommes par Ra;" ap. *Transactions of Society of Biblical Archæology*, iv, p. 1. The figures have been reproduced by Lanzone in his *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, Pl. CLXXII.

Creator, offering to fight the surviving rebels who were the last victims that fell. Ra formed an alliance with men and forgave them in the following terms: "Your sins are remitted to you; the murder (of the rebels) is accepted in lieu of the murder (of all men); hence the virtue of sacrifices." M. Naville, who first translated this text, has clearly shown its interest: "The idea which led to the institution of sacrifice is the same as that found among the Hebrews and the Greeks."[1] The death of the culprit, for whom an animal victim was later substituted, was intended to ward off punishment from the rest of mankind: through a sacrifice, mankind may be redeemed.

There is no other analogy between the destruction of men by Ra and that recorded in *Genesis*. *The Book of the Dead* has retained, however, an account of the punishment of men by water. It is a dialogue between the deceased and several divinities, Toum among them. To a question put by the deceased, Toum replies in these words: "I shall undo what I have done. This earth shall be flooded and become water, as it was in the beginning. I shall remain alone with Osiris."[2]

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[1] Naville, *Religion des anciens Égyptiens*, 1905, p. 183.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Texts of this kind are scarce and not as yet perfectly intelligible; it may, nevertheless, be inferred from them that in Egypt also "it repented the Lord that he had made man on earth, and it grieved him at his heart, . . . and he said: I will destroy him." What part did the woman play, through cunning or seduction, in the initial revolt of man? No answer is found in Egyptian texts; but a papyrus commented upon by M. Lefébure, presents an episode of a strife between the Creator on the one hand and the woman and serpent on the other. "Isis was a woman clever in speech; her heart was weary of the society of men, she preferred the society of gods, she valued highly the world of spirits. Could she not be like unto Ra, in heaven and on earth, possess the earth and be a goddess, through the Name of the august god?" "Now, Ra used to come every day, with his train of ferrymen, to take his seat upon the throne of the double horizon. The god had become old; his mouth was watering and his spittle trickled down upon the earth. Isis kneaded this in her hand; with earth and what was upon it she moulded a sacred serpent. And the sacred serpent bit Ra: the god opened his mouth and his cry rose to heaven. Forthwith, his divine cycle exclaimed: 'What is the matter?' and his gods, forthwith, exclaimed: 'What is this?' . . . He could not answer; his jaws cracked, he was trembling in all his limbs, the poison was spreading through his body." Magicians were sent for in haste; Isis came with her charms; she said: "What, divine father! a serpent has worked evil in thee? . . . One of thy creatures hath risen against thee?" If he wanted to be cured, she stipulated that he reveal his Name to her, that is to say, the secret of his omnipotence. The god, conquered by feminine cunning, gave up his Name. "Isis," M. Lefébure says, "is a kind of Eve, trying to obtain divinity by snatching away supreme knowledge."[1] This revolt was one of the things that brought about the punishment of men; the text analysed above contains also Ra's reprimand of Seb (the earth) "because of the serpents who are in him," and which made the god fear for his existence.

It seems to me that such is the explanation given by the Egyptians of the sad destiny of man. After revolt and punishment, mankind bears the weight of an original sin, of which life is the expiation. This point brings us back to the ideas expounded in *The Book of the Dead*. Most of the important chapters, especially those aiming at a synthesis of human life, lay stress upon a sin that has left its stain on man. How grandiloquent is the profession of faith in Chapter XVII, where the deceased affirms his divine nature! But it thrills our hearts to see how, soon afterwards, the tone changes, because man has fallen from the heights to which he was raised, down to the level of human misery:

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[1] Lefébure, *Un chapitre de la chronique solaire* (1883).

> Chapter XVII.—I am of the earth, I come from my city. I have put away my uncleanness, I have made an end of my guilt.
>
> *What is that?*
>
> (Comment): It is the cutting off of the shame of the Osiris N. . . . All my stains are driven out.
>
> *What is that?*
>
> (Comment): I have been purified on the day of my birth, in the great lake of Natron, where abide Ra and Justice. . . . All the stains that are mine . . .
>
> *What is that?*
>
> (Comment): It is all that the Osiris N has committed against the gods since he came forth from his mother's womb.
>
> Chapter LXIV.—I come unto the god. There is no longer in me any uncleanness from my mother.

Does this uncleanness, inherited from the mother, this stain, consequent upon birth, mean anything else than an original sin? Do not also the above quoted verses suggest two remedies? For my part (agreeing on that point with M. de

Rougé), I see in those texts a direct allusion to *circumcision* and *baptism.* In fact, there is a Memphite tomb dating from the Vth dynasty which shows us a picture of the surgical operation; only, we don't know if such an operation was the common custom. As for baptism, evidence of it is given in Deir-el-Bahri and Luxor where are pictures representing the purifications performed in the birth chamber, when a royal child comes into the world.

Yet, such purifying rites were not considered sufficient to liberate man from the consequences of sin. In chapters XVII and CXXV of *The Book*, it is stated that a judgment before Osiris is the inevitable consequence of earthly existence. Life must, therefore, be directed along the way of Right and Truth, according to the example of the gods, and paradise must be the reward of merit. This is expressed in the following verse of Chapter XVII:

> I walk along the way I know, my face (turned) towards the Lake of Double Justice.
>
> *What is that ?*
>
> (Comment): It is the way followed by Toum, when he passes over to the Elysian Fields. The Lake of Double Justice is at Abydos (near Osiris).

We have explained elsewhere how the idea of the

Last Judgment was worked out during the Memphite Kingdom. Since the Theban dynasties, about 1500 B.C., the scene of the sitting tribunal has come to the foreground, and forms an essential part of *The Book of the Dead*. Whereas the texts in the pyramids give only a brief definition of it, *The Book* devotes its longest chapter to the subject. The "Negative Confession," quoted above, has enabled us to appreciate the standard of Egyptian ethics; let us now follow the different stages of development that the conception of morality underwent.

Many sins are concerned with attacks upon the gods or their property: failure or neglect to perform rituals, theft of the offerings, slaughter of the sacred animals, etc. Such acts were presumably the first denounced as crimes by the priests. At a later period we see the justice of Osiris extended to cover the relations of men to one another. Then appear sins committed against one's neighbour: "to drive back his water, to cut off running water, to extinguish a fire." The sins which last of all were recognised as evil were those of a personal nature, those offending only moral dignity. Among them are almost all "capital" sins, falsehood, pride, vice, anger, cruelty, selfishness, as many faults as the deceased has to defend himself against before the tribunal of Osiris. Thus, the gods are no longer satisfied with avenging the wrongs done to them; they become the avengers of any wrong done to mankind or to the moral ideal.

Along with this change of attitude, a transformation took place in the tribunal itself. The oldest versions of Judgment represent each sin typified by a special god. The deceased has to ingratiate himself with each god by his confession; but to win him over he also uses entreaties or threats; should religion fail, magic can help him out. Now, if the deceased knows the name of each god in the jury—and it is his boast that he does—how can the god resist a call upon his own name, a summons, an incantation directed against him personally? . . .[1]

In later versions, the confession is no longer addressed to these gods only. Other divinities are present at the weighing of the soul, those of Heliopolis; before these the deceased has to justify himself, not with individual arguments, but in the name of morals in general. This is the outcome of more advanced ethics.[2]

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[1] To know the name of a god is to get mastery, power, over him.

[2] Naville, *Todtenbuch*, Texte, p. 164 and plate CXXXVI, Ag.

A parallel transformation can be traced in the method of punishment. In olden times, the forty-two jurors avenged themselves upon the culprit by devouring him. Later appeared a hybrid monster, crocodile-lion-hippopotamus, the "Eater of the Dead," or Amaït, entrusted with the general chastisement. In a still later period, mention is made of a Lake of Fire, where the reprobates are annihilated. Shall we conclude that punishment has ceased to be the personal function of certain gods, who avenged certain crimes concerning them separately? In that case, punishment is not dependent in some way upon the individual caprices of the jurors, it is meted out by a kind of executioner at the service of the whole tribunal,[1] or a destructive element, such as fire. Here again, ideal Justice gains ground by ceasing to be individual.

Finally, we see in the editions of *The Book of the Dead*, dating from the New Kingdom, that man has awakened to the consciousness of his guilt. When he comes before the tribunal, he does not try to deny his sins; rather, he entreats the gods to destroy every wrong in him.[2] Chapter XXX shows how scrupulous his conscience has become. The thing that strikes the deceased with terror on the Day of Judgment is not the assembly of the gods; the direst experience for him is to see his own heart, his own conscience put in one pan of the scales, counterbalancing Truth: "My heart, my mother, heart of my mother, heart of my birth, heart, the dweller in my body on earth, do not oppose me before the sovereign powers, do not weigh against me . . . do not say: 'That is what he hath done, in sooth, he hath done so . . .' let there not rise against me what is wrong in me before the great god of the West."

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[1] *Cf.* Chap. XVII of *Todtenbuch*, where the executioner is sometimes Set, sometimes Horus or Thot.

[2] *Todtenbuch*, Chap. XVII, ed. Budge, p. 38, 1, 85–86; *cf.* De Rougé, ap. *Revue Archéologique*, 1860, p. 218.

Thus, "the most implacable accuser of man is he whose assertions cannot be contested, he himself, his own heart, which is fully aware that often he violated the moral law that he knew perfectly."[1] That moral law, the accomplishment of which will redeem man from original sin, can be summed up in one precept: "Practice the Right, observe Truth." The mission of man on earth is to prevent the effects of the original sin; he will succeed if, bearing in mind his celestial origin, he performs his deeds in harmony with divine activity. "The god," say the liturgical texts, "creates Truth, lives upon Truth, is nothing but Truth." Man

[1] Ed. Naville, *La religion des anciens Égyptiens*, p. 183.

must, therefore, observe the laws of nature and of conscience; to do otherwise, to commit deeds of selfishness, violence, injustice is to act contrary to the pre-established harmony between men and things, to renounce the domain of reality and to falsify the work of the Creator. The wicked man forgets that he is but a particle of the divine in the divine whole; he disturbs the order of the Universe, he "is not in the Truth." The righteous man furthers the intent of the Creator; by practising charity, fraternity, justice, he helps maintain the general order and contributes to the universal harmony; after death, his lot shall be to enjoy Truth without obstacle: "Those who have practised justice when on earth, and who have fought for their gods, are called to the abode of the Joy of the World, the land where one lives by justice. Their just actions are taken into account in the presence of the great god, the Destroyer of Iniquity, and Osiris saith unto them: 'To ye, Justice, be united, O ye Just, to what ye have done, in the condition of those who are in my train, in the palace of the Holy Spirit. Live upon the same nutriment they partake of; drink of your Lake: it is filled to the brim with justice.'"[1]

The Day of Judgment was, therefore, the great day of human destiny: *Dies iræ, dies illa!* "Then shall be brought the book which contains everything useful for the judgment of the world, and nothing shall be left unpunished."[1] The just were, therefore, to live on, but the guilty were delivered up to devouring monsters, or to eternal flames and were annihilated. Chabas was right to point out, a long time ago, the striking analogy between this Egyptian idea of hell and the tradition recorded in the Gospel.

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[1] Lefébure, *Sphinx*, viii, 39. *Cf.* Plato's *Gorgias*.

"The Egyptian hell," he says, "had burning regions, fiery abysses, flaming waters, the only drink offered to quench the thirst of the perverse. The demons, tormentors of the damned, lived in halls, the floors of which were water, the ceilings fire, and the sides live snakes; there were gridirons and caldrons for the torture of the sinners." Yet, fully to appreciate the standard of Egyptian ethics, a parallel may best be drawn between the requirements made of the just, in formulæ, already used at the time of the pyramids, and the following passage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew:

> When the Son of man shall come in his glory, . . . He shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. . . . Then shall

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[1] *Dies iræ.*

the King say unto them on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. . . .

Compare with it this text from a papyrus:

"Amon-Ra, the Redresser of Wrongs, does not receive the presents of the violent men; he judges the guilty; the guilty are for the caldron, the righteous for his right hand." Or the following passage from Chapter CXXV: "The righteous man lives upon truth, he feeds upon truth. He has spread joy everywhere; what he hath done, men speak of, and the gods rejoice over. He hath conciliated the god by his love, he hath given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked. . . ."[1]

However lofty this moral ideal, it was marred by a serious blemish. We have pointed out that in the time of the pyramids magic prevailed over religion and that the just man fared no better than the wicked, armed with effectual formulæ. *The Book of the Dead* itself, even in the latest

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[1] Chabas, "*L'Enfer égyptien*," *ap. Mélanges égyptologiques*, iii, 2. p. 168.

Egyptian versions, emphasises in each chapter the supreme power of rites and words. What avails the moral elevation of Chapter CXXV if its contents may be made to act mechanically, in the way of an exorcism, whether the deceased has lived justly or not? True it is that *The Book* was considered by the majority of believers as a mere collection of magic formulæ; yet, the consciousness of wrong-doing and the concern about Judgment are put forth too often and too forcibly for us to imagine that cultivated minds relied solely on the assistance of sorcery. On the contrary, each sentence in *The Book* is ringing, as it were, with the echo of the *Dies iræ:* "What shall I, unfortunate one, then answer? What shall I beseech to intercede for me, when even the righteous shall doubt their safety?" One thing is certain: with the lapse of years the Egyptians had become more and more scrupulous and anxious; but in what religion has the awakening of conscience ever done away with the belief in indulgences? Cannot the doctrine of salvation by grace be reconciled with faith in salvation through well-doing?

A recent discovery has confirmed the impression that the conscience of the Egyptians tended to become nicer and their moral ideal purer. On the recto of a papyrus, dating from the first years of our era, a didactic story has come down to us, in which the idea of Judgment shows a significant development. Senosiris, a child-prodigy, born a magician, leads his father, Satmi, into the underworld, and shows him the seven great halls of Osiris's dwellings. Before entering, they meet the funeral procession of a rich man, about to be buried in the most sumptuous manner, and also the corpse of a poor wretch, rolled in a sordid mat and accompanied by no one. In the sixth Hall of Hades, our heroes now admire Osiris, Thot, Anubis, the other judges, and the scales in which sins and virtues are weighed: "He, whose misdeeds outweigh his good deeds, is given up to Amaït, the bitch of the ruler of the West; they (the gods) destroy his soul and body, and do not let him breathe again; as for him whose merits are found more numerous than his sins, they take him among the gods, and his soul goes to heaven; he whose virtues counterbalance his sins is placed among the shades, who serve Sokar-Osiris (inside the earth). And behold! Satmi noticed a personage of distinction, clothed in fine linen and standing near the place where Osiris was, in foremost rank. 'My father Satmi,' said Senosiris, 'dost thou not see this high personage? The poor man, whom thou sawest brought out from Memphis, without anyone following him, and who was rolled in a mat, it is he! He was taken to Hades, his misdeeds were weighed against his merits and found light in comparison. His happiness on earth was not commensurate to the length of his life; hence it was ordered by Osiris that the funeral equipment of the rich man, whom thou sawest coming from Memphis in great pomp, should be transferred to this poor man, and that he should be put near Osiris. The sins of the rich man were found to outweigh his good deeds; it was ordered he should be rewarded in Hades and thou hast seen him, at the entrance of Hades, the hinge of the door thrust into his right eye, turning on that eye both for opening and shutting the door, while his mouth utters hideous cries. . . . He who has done good on earth is repaid with good here; but he who does wrong is repaid with wrong. These things thou seest in the Hades of Memphis have been established for ever and shall never change, and they come to pass in the forty-two nomes where reside the gods of Osiris's council.' "[1]

How much improved in its final stage is the conception of the reward of virtue and vice!

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[1] Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Égypte ancienne*, 3d ed., p. 134-8.

There has been devised a purgatory, the earthly underworld, called Sokar-Osiris, as an intermediate place for the men whose merits only balance their faults. As for the just, not only are they admitted to eternal life, but Osiris rewards them *in proportion* to their merit, so that the future life makes reparation for the discrepancies and iniquities of earthly life. In the Gospel, according to St. Luke, a similar parable relates the fate of the rich man burning in hell, while Lazarus reposes after death in Abraham's bosom. "Son, remember," says Abraham to the rich man, "that thou in thy lifetime didst receive thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. . . ."

The true recompense for the just consisted, then, in being liberated from the human condition. Having escaped the contingencies and the errors of earthly life, they ended their destiny by being absorbed in the Divine that knows and realises nothing but Right and Truth. It seems to me that such is the deep meaning of that enigmatic expression "to come forth by day," "to become manifest in the day," *per m harou*, which is the title of *The Book of the Dead*, and sums it up. The soul of the just might now dwell in the tomb, or the different paradises opened to it, or leave them at will. It might return to the earth, mingle again with the living, sail across the heaven in the barge of the gods, visit the stars, under the outward appearance of a man, god, animal, plant or any object whatever. It tested life in all its aspects, because life was identical with the vast Universe. The just man returned to the bosom of the Creator, from whom everything emanates, to whom returns every being who through his own fault does not deviate from his prescribed destiny: "I am Yesterday and To-morrow, I am the sum of beings and of things."

The obvious objection to this explanation is that it requires a strong intellectual culture to accept without apprehension the conclusion of pantheism: the absorption in the Divine. Many an Egyptian was rather struck with fear at the thought of finally vanishing into the Divine, and it is a melancholy kind of resignation that pervades the official songs, chanted to the harp-accompaniment at the funerals of the kings:

> This greatness upon earth, what is it? Why the annihilation in the tomb? (To die) is to be formed in the image of Eternity, the land of Right, where there is no strife and where violence is abhorred, where nobody wrongs his neighbour, where nobody,

of all the generations therein, ever revolts. To all, when they are on this earth, from the moment they come into life, it is said: "Go in prosperity, health and safety, so as to arrive at the tomb, always thinking in thy heart of the day when thou must lie on a funeral bed. Such is thy lot: to be reunited to the rulers of Eternity. Thou shalt never pass; thou art accomplished and perfect in the great divine forms, thou endurest the periods of eternity and thy annals are continually renewed, because thou hast been made perfect and raised unto thy true nature."[1]

One of the consequences of this melancholy is the keen feeling that the joys of this perishable world are not renewed elsewhere; we must, therefore, enjoy human life, take everything good it offers before death:

> Make thy day happy! let there be always perfumes and essences for thy nostrils, garlands and lotus-flowers for the shoulders and the breast of thy beloved sister-spouse! Let there be songs and music before thee, and, neglecting all evil, think only of pleasures, until the day when thou must land on the shore of the goddess who loves silence. . . . Always bear in mind that day when thou shalt be led to the country where men are mingled: whither no one ever took his wealth with him and whence no one ever returned.[2]

Appeal was made to philosophy in order to soothe the rebellion of the flesh. A certain papyrus, four thousand years old, has retained for us a dialogue between an Egyptian and his soul,[1] in which all the motives for loving death are set forth, in regular sequence, not without poetical beauty. Life is bad; every man knows it: "To whom shall I speak to-day? Our neighbour is mischievous and the friends of to-day love no one. Hearts are violent and every one robs his neighbour; the weak perish and the strong triumph; there are no just, and the earth belongs to sinners." Let us quote, by way of antithesis, this praise of death: "Death seems to me now the cure for illness, the escape into the open, after fever! . . . Death seems to me now like the perfume of the lotus flower, like repose on the shore of a land of enchantment, like the return home of a sailor! Death seems to me now like the desire felt by a man, after many years of captivity, to see his home again."

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[1] Translated by G. Maspero, *Histoire*, ii, p. 523.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii, p. 524.

Death is the means of returning into the divine fatherland, whence man was exiled during his sojourn on earth. Such is the conclusion of *The Book of the Dead*. In spite of its many obscurities, *The Book* will be intelligible to us if we try to trace in it the development of the theme cherished by moralists and theologians of all times: "Everything is vain in man, if it is considered in respect to mortal life, but everything is precious, is important, if we view the final aim of that life and the account we must give of it."[1]

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[1] Translated by Erman, *Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, 1896, and Maspero, *Causeries d'Égypte*, p. 125.

The same ideas still govern mankind. Poetical feeling draws upon the same sources, when it promises the wretched human creature deliverance into the great Whole. Is it Isis, or is it Isolde who, before expiring, sings over a corpse:

"O joy! to be lost, absorbed, unconscious, in the infinite breath of the universal soul"?[2]

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[1] Bossuet, *Oraison funèbre d'Henriette d'Angleterre.*

[2] Wagner: *Tristan und Isolde:*

"In des Welt-athems wehen dem All
Ertrinken,
Versinken,
Unbewusst,
Höchste Lust."

CHAPTER VI

MAGIC IN ANCIENT EGYPT

In Ancient Egypt, as everywhere in the world, man has been discontented with his destiny and has tried to improve it. Not only did he exert, for this purpose, the natural powers of his body and mind, but he also had recourse to the supernatural powers that religion and magic seemed to offer him. The difference between the two is well known. Like religion, magic sets before itself the task of modifying the usual and regular order of things by miracles; but whereas the priest repeats prayers and makes offerings, in order to conciliate superior beings called gods, the magician makes use of force and craft. The priest implores, the magician commands, and as experience proves that force is more effectual than prayer, it follows that among the primitive peoples the wizard has more authority than the priest—unless the priest, as is often the case in Egypt, is himself a magician, who sometimes deigns to mingle prayers with his objurgations.

In a society in which the belief in magic has taken hold, it is universally held that every being, every thing is animated with a Spirit, similar to that which dwells in the human body. Nothing in nature is inactive, deprived of will or consciousness; every being or thing may act for or against man, and reciprocally the magician may put in action any being or thing that he wants to influence. Thus, in Egypt, gods and men are said to possess a "Génie" which animates them during their existence and, provided certain precautions are taken, is assured a life after death. It is the *Ka*, a word for which there is no adequate foreign equivalent; the translation given is "Double" but the meaning of the Egyptian term would perhaps be better expressed by the word "Génie."[1] Animals are possessed of a Ka, and even things, in which there is no apparent life, hide an invisible spirit. Hence can be explained the custom, at different periods of history, of obliterating in the inscriptions the hieroglyphic signs which represented animals, and also of breaking up, in order to kill them and allow them to pass into the other world, the jars, pieces of furniture, and fragments of stones *inscribed with texts* and deposited in the tombs: these very signs of writing, or the objects mentioned, are endowed with a soul and, therefore, animated with a Génie that may be useful to the deceased, or do him harm. It is not yet clear what the Egyptians called that "spirit" in animals and things; but there is no doubt that, for them, the whole Universe was peopled with active and conscious forces, among which man was sure to meet adversaries or allies.

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[1] The idea of "generation" in its meaning of "procreation" and "species" is indisputably associated with the root *Ka*, which helps to form words like "person," "bull," "male." That is why the word *Ka* recalls to mind the similar Latin word *genius*. (Also *cf*. Lefébure, *Sphinx*, i, 108.)

Over things and beings endowed with a Génie, he alone has power who knows, either by tradition or personal observation, the general rules governing the sensuous and spiritual world. Such a man is the "Wise" par excellence, *rekh khetou*, "he who knows things." He knows the natural affinities, the "sympathies" or "antipathies" which in the Universe unite or divide matter, as well as living beings. He may bring into a determined state such being or thing by using the means of attraction or repulsion fatally exercised on it by another being or thing; in other words, by using the method of *sympathetic*

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[1] As M. Maspero has rightly pointed out, the Egyptians often gave a surname to things and manufactured objects, thus conferring on them a real personality (*cf. Les Contes populaires de l'Égypte ancienne*, 3 ed., p. 95, n. 3).

magic.[1] On the other hand, the learned or "wise" man has observed the laws of "imitation" and those of "cause and effect." If a being or thing, placed under certain conditions, has acted or reacted in a certain way, it will do the same when placed under similar conditions; moreover, this result may be obtained by merely "imitating" a certain act, the effects of which are definitely known. Thus the magician boasts of bringing about a repetition of the effects, by repeating or imitating the causes which have already acted once: in other words, he uses the method of *imitative magic.* The master of such secrets, the magician, can dispense with prayers and command at will the reciprocal influences, the fatal actions and reactions of things and beings.[2]

To make each point clearer, we shall first analyse the processes of sympathetic magic, then those of imitative magic; first the methods employed to obtain *protection* against dangers of all kinds, then those used to gain *active power* over beings and things.

The magician protects his own life and that of others from fortuitous dangers through talismans and formulæ; he foresees future dangers through his knowledge of the future.

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[1] *Cf.* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 2d ed., 1900, i, pp. 9*ff.*

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 10*ff.*

In the cases of our museums are exhibited by the thousands little objects of diverse shapes and materials, called Egyptian amulets. They are found strewn among the sand in the chambers of the tombs, or buried with the mummies; they are made of glazed earth, or glass paste, or more or less precious stones; generally they were so cheap that it was possible to throw a quantity of them in the sarcophagus, so as to increase their influence by their number. But, in theory, the amulet had to be of choice material and of a definite shape in order to possess its full power.

In Egypt, as in other countries, the shape of the amulets was dependent upon the special ideas held by the primitive peoples about human life. Life seemed a spirit, a breath, a being having its own separate existence, that might, therefore, escape from the body, and had to be carefully kept *bound* to that body. Hence, amulets take the shape of knots and bands, because they tie life to certain parts of the body where it is most exposed and can be detected by the beating of the pulse: the neck, the wrist, the ankles. In Egypt, such knots are bracelets, periscelides, necklaces, either narrow or broad. The texts say that the necklace was a shield for the breast of gods and dead alike; it came to be itself considered as a god whose arms protected the part of the body in contact with them.[1] Bracelets and necklaces often consisted of separate little knots, strung together so as to make up a jewel of magic purport; very often, also, such knots are placed separately on the body of the living and of the dead: they hold in life at these places, and prevent it from leaving the body. Hence the etymological meaning of "protection, guard" preserved by those signs in the Egyptian language.

Other talismans were derived from hieroglyphic signs to which a symbolical meaning was attached: 𓋹 *ânkh*, life; 𓍑 *ouza*, health; 𓌀 *ouser*, strength; 𓊽 *dad*, stability; 𓌉 *hez*, vigour and freshness of body and spirit. When first devised, these signs acted by virtue of their specific form: 𓋹 was perhaps the representation of a man with arms and legs stretched out (the lower part of the sign in the archaic period had two legs); 𓌀 a sceptre, the insignia of strength; 𓊽 the image of four pillars seen in perspective, the symbol of stability; 𓌉 a column in the form of the lotus flower, a hardy plant. In course of time, more importance was given to the idea attached to such or such a sign by the conventional writing: thus 𓄤 "beauty, goodness";

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[1] A. Moret, *Rituel du Culte divin*, p. 243.

𓊽 "stability"; 𓏊 "favour"; 𓂀 "health" etc., became as many symbols transformed into amulets capable of magic power. The Egyptian hieroglyphics, by giving a conventional meaning to material objects, greatly encouraged the symbolic attribution of a certain virtue to a particular object. In most cases, the magic power ascribed to knots, jewels, amulets, comes under the definition of imitative magic: one imitated and therefore conferred life with 𓋹; stability with 𓊽; enclosure and protection with 𓍢.

The substance of which such objects were made also exercised a special influence. More efficacious than any others were the amulets made of gold, a metal symbolic of duration, indestructibility; gold being the king of metals, a solidified ray of sunshine was the substance of which were made the bodies of imperishable beings: kings, gods, divine dead (because the dead, made divine, became gods themselves). That is why the 𓎬, 𓄣, 𓊽, bracelets, necklaces, weapons, had to be made of gold or at least of gilded wood.[1] Colours, as well, exercised a specific influence: the green column[2] 𓇅 ensured greenness, freshness, strength, provided it was made of green glazed earth; the knot , the pillar , called forth the idea of Isis's blood, provided they were made of carnelian;[1] green, red, yellow, and white swathing-bands conferred on the dead and on the gods the qualities of freshness, brilliancy, and purity with which they were endowed. There were a series of supernatural actions in which the properties and "spirit" of each object acted through a kind of material infiltration:[2] the gold communicated its indestructibility, the green its hardiness, the white its candour; in other words, an object acted "sympathetically" upon him who was clothed in it.

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[1] A. Moret, *Le titre d'Horus d'or dans le protocole pharaonique.*

[2] *Book of the Dead*, Chap. CL.

Talismans possess a stronger power if they are accompanied by formulæ. Of such formulæ, the Egyptians had a remarkable supply: *hikaou* means "magic formulæ;" *saou*, "exorcisms"; *shenitou*, "bands, charms"; *hesiou*, "incantations." The use of such formulæ is probably posterior to that of the material talismans. They were invented to increase, by the magic effect of voice and articulated language, the power of the object formerly residing only in its shape and substance; a more refined spiritual element combined now with the purely material charm.

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[1] *Book of the Dead*, chap. CLV; Maspero, *Papyrus du Louvre*, p. 2 and following.

[2] A. Moret, *Rituel du Culte divin*, p. 178.

Magic formulæ are known to us only from texts of recent discovery; this explains why the first Egyptologists considered them the outcome of a deterioration of religion in the decadence of Egyptian civilisation. But the oldest religious texts that we know of up to this time, those in the pyramids of Sakkarah (Vth–VIth dynasty), contain rhythmical formulæ against the bites of snakes, and often allude to magic rites. It is a proof that magic texts "belong to the most remote antiquity and are an essential part of the Egyptian religion."[1] Formulæ are, of course, weapons of greater precision than simple talismans; they are directed against a definite enemy and enlarge the field of magic. From the most remote times, there were incantations especially concerned with the gods,[2] therefore antedating the periods of elaboration of the first Egyptian mythology. Almost always the magician alluded in them to mythological acts well known to him, but obscure to us; he called upon a god who formerly overcame the dangers against which the formula was supposed to be a protection; he boasted of having power to compel the god to renew his victory over the foe once subdued by him under similar circumstances. He who recited the formula became like the god on the day of his triumph and was bound to be victorious like the god. The animal, on the other hand, was supposed to have a personality almost divine, and was combated as such. These proceedings depended upon the laws of "imitation" and of "cause and effect" mentioned above.

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[1] Maspero: *Les inscriptions des Pyramides de Sakkarah*, p. 48.

[2] For instance, in the Pyramid of Ounas, 307, "Ra stings the scorpion"; 332, "Tombe (serpent), flame coming from the Nu"; 326, mention of Atoum and Sokaris.

Here are a few examples of an application of these beliefs. Suppose you were bitten by a serpent; an appropriate formula declared to your enemy that you are the god Horus and that you defy him: "Rise, venom, rise and fall to the earth. Horus speaketh to thee, annihilates thee, spits upon thee. Thou dost not rise any more, but thou fallest, thou art weak and thou art not strong; thou art blind and thou dost not see; thy head droops and cannot rise any more; for I am Horus, the great magician."[1]

In dealing with a scorpion, you had to recall the case of the divine cat, Bast, who was stung by a scorpion but healed by Ra: "'O Ra, come to thy daughter whom a scorpion has bitten by the wayside. Her cry riseth toward heaven; the venom runs throughout her limbs and she puts her mouth on them (to suck it).' Thereupon Ra hath said to her: 'Fear not, fear not, my noble daughter! Behold! I am standing behind thee. I drive back the venom running in all the limbs of the cat.'"[1] He who recited the formula was certain to be protected by the cat, Bast, that he called forth.

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[1] *Stela of Metternich*, 3.

To ward off the crocodile, in crossing a ford, mention had to be made of Osiris, who was saved by the intervention of the gods: "O thou, who art in the water, behold! it is Osiris who is in the water, and the eye of Horus and the great scarab protect him. . . . Get ye back, beasts of the waters! Do not show your face, for Osiris is floating toward you. . . . Beasts of the waters, your mouth is closed by Ra, your throat is closed by Sechmet, your teeth are broken by Thot, your eyes blinded by the great magician. Those four gods protect Osiris and all those who are in the water."[2]

Against dangerous animals, serpents, crocodiles, scorpions, lions, oryxes, etc., the magician knew how to combine the power of amulets with that of formulæ; hence the use of talismans inscribed with texts and figures, the most important of which are the stelæ and magic sticks. The stelæ are of the type of the so-called Metternich stela; on a plaquette of granite or basalt, generally of small size, they show on one surface a figure in relief of the child Horus, naked, with a lock of hair falling upon his right shoulder; the god tramples upon crocodiles which turn away their heads to get out of his sight; with his hands outstretched he lays hold upon the tails of snakes, scorpions, lions, oryxes. Above Horus often appears the head of Bes, the jolly and warlike god who brings good luck. "Such stelæ aimed at protection not only from the bite or sting of the animals represented, but from the fascination exercised by them over their victims before biting or stinging them."[1] On the other side of the stela are engraved divine figures of good omen; often the gods are represented stretching the bow, thrusting the spear at the malicious animals, in a word, fighting for the magician who has called upon them for help. The legend formulæ quoted above are inscribed in the space left for the text to be fully developed. Stelæ of this type appear especially at a later period of history;[2]

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[1] *Stela of Metternich*, 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, 38. *Cf.* Erman, *Die ægyptische Religion*, p. 150.

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[1] Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, ii, 418–419.

[2] Daressy, "Textes et dessins magiques" (*Catalogue of the Cairo Museum*).

in earlier times, use was made of magic sticks, most often of ivory, exhibiting figures of real or fantastic animals (the stick often terminates in an animal's head), or gods with heads of animals or of men; among others is often seen the god Bes, holding serpents in the attitude later to be assumed by Horus. Such objects assured to their owner the magic protection of the figures engraved on them, and this protection was against animals especially.[1]

In case of illness, the magic process was the same, for the ill person was possessed of an *adversary* (*Kheft*), whose inauspicious presence in his body was responsible for all the evil. The magician, like the priest and the physician, knew the art of healing; he obtained his knowledge from mysterious books granted by the gods to certain men under miraculous circumstances. So the *Treatise how to destroy abscesses* in all parts of the body was found under the feet of the god Anubis and brought to King Ousaphaïs[2] (Ist dynasty); the medical papyrus kept in London "was found a certain night in the great hall of the temple in Koptos by a priest of this temple. There was darkness over all the earth, but the moon shone upon the book and lighted it with its rays. It was brought to King Cheops (IVth dynasty)." As the books on therapeutics were supposed to be of divine origin it is not surprising that the remedies prescribed in them were of a rather supernatural order. The method employed to drive off the *adversary* was the same as that resorted to in fighting against dangerous animals. By the aid of a formula, the personality of some god who by tradition has power over the *adversary*, the cause of the illness, is substituted for that of the suffering man. Against pain in the stomach, for instance, the magician declared earnestly: "This stomach is that of Horus speaking to Isis. Horus saith: 'I have eaten some of the fish Abt, that is made of gold.' Isis answereth: 'If it be so, the gods shall help thee.' Rub the stomach with honey; wash the stomach with a liquid kept in a vase on which are represented the gods of the South and of the North, Ra, Horus, Thot, Toum, Isis, Nephthys, three-eyed Ouza, and three uræi."[1]

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[1] F. Legge, "The Magic Ivories of the Middle Empire" (*Proceedings, S. B. A.*, 1905–6); *cf.* Capart, *Revue de l'Histoire des religions*, 1906, p. 327.

[2] Papyrus Ebers, 103, i, 1–2.

Here is a case of confinement. The woman in childbed is assimilated with Isis and claims imperiously the help of the gods: "O ye gods, come to help; here is Isis; she is seated like a pregnant woman; if ye remain inactive, O gods, there shall be no more heaven and no more earth; . . . disasters shall come from the North; there shall rise cries from the tombs, the sun shall shine no more at noon, the water of the Nile shall not overflow. It is not I who am speaking, it is Isis about to give birth to Horus."[1]

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[1] Pleyte, *Study on a Magic Scroll in Leyde*, p. 142.

This intervention of the gods, bound by magic formulæ and compelled to serve those who know them, is also made clear by a famous monument in the National Library in Paris: the stela of the princess of Bakhtan. In the legendary country of Bakhtan, a princess called Bintrashit, the sister of one of Pharaoh's wives, was suffering from a mysterious disease. Neither the physicians nor the magicians of the country could relieve her. The prince of Bakhtan asked his brother-in-law, the Pharaoh, to send him a Wiseman, that is to say, an Egyptian magician. Pharaoh sent one of the "scribes of the double house of life" who diagnosed the case as being that of a woman possessed: "The magician found Bintrashit in this condition and found out the evil spirit which possessed her, an enemy dangerous to fight." Incapable of driving away the terrible adversary, the magician called an Egyptian god to his help.

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[1] Pleyte, *Study on a Magic Scroll in Leyde*, p. 180.

The god Khonsu set forth for Bakhtan, after receiving from his elder brother, Khonsw-of-good-advice, a "fluid of life" and a magic power sufficient to resist all struggles. "When the god arrived at Bakhtan, behold! the prince came with his soldiers and captains to meet Khonsu; he lay flat upon his belly, saying: 'Thou hast come to us according to the bidding of Pharaoh.' . . . And lo, as soon as the god came before Bintrashit and made magic passes over her head, she felt well at once, and the evil spirit that was in her said to Khonsu: 'Come in peace, thou great god who drivest away strangers; Bakhtan is thy city, its people are thy slaves, and I myself am thy slave. I shall go to the place whence I came, so as to give satisfaction unto thy heart, in this case that brought thee here; only let it be ordered that a festival be celebrated in honour of me and of the prince of Bakhtan.' The god approved of it, and after great offerings had been made to Khonsu and to the evil spirit, the latter departed in peace to the place he chose to go to according to the bidding of Khonsu."[1]

In this tale, we see a god using his magic power against an evil spirit, in the service of the Pharaoh.

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[1] *Cf.* Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Égypte ancienne*, 3d edition, p. 161 and following.

The Pharaoh was, indeed, the head of the magicians in his kingdom and we shall refer later to this important attribute of kingship in Egypt. But ordinary citizens also might guard themselves from the attacks of an evil spirit, provided they knew an efficacious formula; for instance, the following one preserved for us in a papyrus at Leyde:

> If you are attacked by a dead (man) some evening when undressing, place under your head [this formula]: "The beauties of (so and so) are the beauties of Osiris; his upper lip is that of Isis; his under lip that of Nephthys, his teeth are like swords, his arms are like those of the gods, his fingers are like divine serpents, his back is like the back of Seb. . . . etc. *There is not one of his limbs that is not like those of a god. . . .*" Words to be said on an amulet, in order to cure and to charm the limbs of a person and his ills. They must be recited when a dead person, male or female, attacks a man while undressing, and drags him away on an evening, in order to torment him.

We again come in contact here with the fraud which consists of taking on the personality of some god, vanquisher of his enemies, so as to cheat the adversary, to put him in such a position that, if imitative magic be true, he cannot have the upper hand.

The magician was proficient not only in fighting against maladies and evils but also in foreseeing them and he averted destiny and fate by prophecies and horoscopes. In this respect, the art of the magician rested on his observations in astronomy. Diodorus writes:

> There is perhaps no country in which the order and movement of the stars are observed with more accuracy than in Egypt. They have preserved for an incredible number of years registries of their observations. . . . There is found information about the relationship of each planet to the birth of animals and about the stars whose influence is good or bad. . . .[1] In the tomb of Osymandyas, in Thebes, there was on the terrace a gold circle having a circumference of 365 cubits, each cubit divided into 365 parts. Each division corresponded to a day of the year, and by its side there was recorded the natural rising and setting of the stars, with the prognostications based thereon by the Egyptian astrologers.[2]

The method for prognostication was this: On a certain day, at a certain hour, the stars occupy a definite position. At some previous time, when the stars were in a similar position, a propitious or unpropitious event came to pass; the same event, or a similar one will probably happen at the moment when the stars assume their former place.[3] The documents that have come down to us show that the events alluded to concerned the life of the gods and referred principally to the daily struggle of Osiris against Set and to the episodes of their alternate defeat and victory. On the seventeenth of the month Athyr, Set killed Osiris; on the ninth of Khoïak, Thot defeated Set; on the fifth of Tybi, Sokhît burnt the impious; the first date was therefore unpropitious, the other two propitious. "Whatsoever thou seest on this day, it shall be favourable." Thus every man had to live again the life of the gods in his own manner, and could not escape their influence. The power of the magician consisted in making these well-known facts from mythology bear on the actions of human life in appropriate circumstances, and also in imitating in the best and most favourable sense, the destiny of the gods.[1]

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[1] Diodorus, i, 71.

[2] *Ibid.*, i, 49.

[3] Papyrus Sallier, translated by Chabas, *Calendrier des jours fastes et néfastes.*

Besides, each year, each month, each day, each hour was supposed to be under the influence of a god or of a star;[2] the magician knew how to render them propitious, or, at least, could warn the people concerned of the lot awaiting them. He knew the diverse fates allotted to each man by the fairy goddesses on his birthday,[3] because this day was entered on his books under a rubric of good or ill omen, with the proper amount of good or bad luck attached to them, and reckoned minutely. "The ninth of Paophi means felicity of the gods; men are joyful, for the enemy of Ra is put down. Whoever is born on that day, will die of old age." "As for the twenty-seventh of Paophi, whoever is born on that day, will die, killed by the crocodile."[1] Popular literature has left us a story about a Predestined Prince:[2] he strives in vain to ward off three fates which, from his birth, condemn him to perish by the serpent, the crocodile, or the dog. The magician could not always thwart destiny; but, at least, his client, forwarned and forearmed, tried to escape his fate by taking useful precautions: staying at home, avoiding all danger, reciting the protective formulæ.

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[1] Maspero, *Les Contes populaires*, Introduction, p. xlix.

[2] Wiedemann, *Magie und Zauberei*, p. 6.

[3] Maspero, *Les Contes populaires*, Introduction, p. li.

Protective rites are only a part of the magic art; its power and prestige are, by far, increased if the magician knows the rites producing action at a distance. The Egyptians contrived to exercise magical influence over men, gods, and the dead for the most varied purposes.

Magic action at a distance, or absent treatment, as it were, of any being whatever, was possible for the Egyptian magician only through the help of gods, or of genii that he had at first to subdue to his power. The scheme of the process was this: The magician invoked a god or a spirit: "Come, venerable spirit . . . "; then, he formulated the wish that had to be fulfilled: "Act for me on such a person, . . . arouse for me such a one, . . . direct his heart towards such a one. . . ." He declared then: "I call thee up by thy real name"; then followed a litany of magic names, composed usually of incomprehensible syllables. Finally, after a declaration intended to frighten the god or genius called forth ("for I am the bull, for I am the lion, I am the head of the venerable lord of Abydos"), the magician gave a magical recipe: recite the formula over an image of Osiris, of Anubis; mix a drink, a concoction, or a salve with herbs, incense, wheat, over which is poured blood of the patient himself, or in which are put small pieces of a corpse.[1] Sometimes mention was made of a figure;[2] the latter, it seems, had to be made in the likeness of the subject of this absent treatment, and the formula recited over this figure was supposed to send to its original dreams of love or of terror, sleep or insomnia, health or death. Such formulæ imply the practice of *envoûtement*, since they allude to figures receiving the direct shock of the magic conjuration. In fact, we know a few cases of *envoûtement* affecting gods or men. The papyrus of Nesiamsou contains an incantation intended to help the god Ra in his daily struggle against Apophis, the evil spirit. A wax statuette was made in the name of Apophis and in his crocodile form. The name of the god was written in green ink upon this figure, which was then wrapped in a papyrus on which the silhouette of Apophis was also sketched. It was necessary to spit first upon the figure, then to hack it with a crude stone knife and to fling it to the ground; then the priest crushed it several times under his left foot, and burnt it over a pile of plants having magic properties. The rite had to be repeated three times a day (probably as a ceremony additional to the ordinary cult), and also when there came a storm, the latter being an omen of danger for the divinities.[1]

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[1] Maspero, *Les Contes populaires*, Introduction, p. l.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

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[1] G. Maspero, *Mémoire sur quelques papyrus du Louvre*, p. 155. *Cf.* the *tabellæ devotionis* found at Hadrumète, the incantations in which date from the Roman period, but were almost entirely borrowed from the Egyptian magic rituals (G. Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, ii. p. 296).

[2] *Papyrus du Louvre*, pp. 117, 118, 120.

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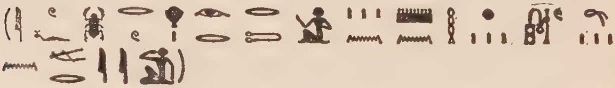
[1] Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, p. 77; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*.

In Egyptian history, there is also an important case of *envoûtement* known to us, which occurred in the reign of Ramses III. An official in the royal palace was convicted of crime for the following deeds:[1] he procured a magic script copied from the secret books of the king, and so succeeded in fascinating (*sih*) the people in the palace; he also managed to "make wax men and writs of wishes":



that is to say, figures over which he recited incantations, in order to attain his desired aim; he was thus able to bewitch, (*hikaou:*) the servants in the harem.

Such examples of *envoûtement* can be explained in the light of one another, so that it becomes easy to realise what general principles underlie active magic with the Egyptians. Here, as in other countries, the magician commanded other beings by making use of: 1st, their names; 2d, figures representing them. These two means of active magic are known to all primitive societies. "A name," writes M. Hartland, "is considered inseparable from its possessor, and the savages take great care to hide from one another the knowledge of their true name,[2] and are satisfied with being addressed and singled out by a surname or an epithet substituted for it.[1] The reason is that knowing the name of another man is to get mastery over him; it is as if this man himself, or an essential part of himself, was put in the possession of the person who obtained knowledge of his name."[2] M. Lefébure, in his very suggestive treatises on the importance of the name among the Egyptians, has demonstrated that this general theory can be applied point by point to Egypt. This explains the care taken by the magicians, while reciting magic formulæ, to pronounce properly the *true* name of the god they wished to call upon; and this name was multiple, or of curious form, but its harmonised sound possessed the power of acting on the being invoked. "In reality, the name of a person, or of a thing is not an algebraic sign, but rather an effective image; therefore, it becomes, in a sense, an integral part of the original; it becomes this original

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[1] Papyrus Lee, *ap*. Deveria *Œuvres*, ii, p. 97.

[2] *Cf.* Lefébure *Sphinx*, i, p. 98: In a legend preserved in the

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Turin papyri the Sun, Ra, confesses: "My name was spoken by my father and my mother, then was hidden in my heart by him who begat me, so as not to allow the enchanter to prevail, who would enchant me."

[1] Called by the Egyptians the "*good name.*" (Lefébure, *Sphinx*, i, p. 97, and following.)

[2] This is what happened to Ra, in the legend related above, as soon as Isis managed to take from him, *i.e.*, from his body, his proper name.

person or object itself, only less material and more manageable, that is to say, adapted to the use of the mind in short, it is a mental substitute for the object." To pronounce the name of a being is tantamount to fashioning his spiritual image; to write a name is equivalent to sketching the material likeness: this is true especially in the case of Egypt where, in hieroglyphic writing, names are accompanied by a *determinative* sketching out, as accurately as possible, objects and beings. Calling forth a name is a practice similar to "the rites of witchcraft, in which the magician fashions the figure of some man, calls *it* by *his* name, and then pierces it with sharp points of thorns, with the intention of inflicting suffering and finally death upon the person represented."[1] Let us conclude that magic action at a distance, or absent treatment, depended in Egypt, as elsewhere, on *imitative magic* and was effected through the name and the figures of the treated beings or things.

Besides the amulets, talismans, formulæ, and horoscopes, used to prevent danger, besides magic *envoûtements* and conjurations used for absent treatment, the practice of magic played an im-

[1] Hartland, *ap.* Lefébure, *loc. cit.*

portant part even in Egyptian religion, and in the cult. The cult of the gods and the dead was imbued with magic to such a degree that a detailed study—extremely difficult in itself, and which would be out of place here—would be necessary to separate what pertains to prayer and sacrifice to the god, and what belongs to witchcraft and magic objurgations. Truth to tell, the priest prostrated himself before the god, implored him, solicited him; but, at the same time, the god needed the priest, because the priest protected him against his enemies, saved him from the Osirian death, shielded him from evil charms, by processes identical with genuine magic. Without the priest, the god had but a latent power; just like an ill man, or one possessed, he, too, had to receive the fluid of life from the hands of the priest and then he was able to drive back his enemies, the typhonic animals, by the same means as his human creatures; he derived benefit from the sacrifice, and the offerings only through the magic virtue of the voice of the priest officiating.[1] The lists of offerings, repeated many times on the walls of the temple, had no effective value and *did*

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[1] The theory of creation by voice and sound has been explained by Maspero (*Études de Mythologie*, ii, p. 372). *Cf.* A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin*, p. 154 and following.

not come forth on the altar, except in response to the voice of the priest;[1] the real offerings, burning on the altar, passed over to the god only after their *names* were pronounced, and their presentation performed with the proper ritualistic formulæ and intonations. The priest—that is to say, the king himself—possessed, indeed, the privilege of gods, creating beings and things by naming them; he was endowed with the "creative voice" through which the demiurgi once called forth the world: he was *mâ khrôou.*[2] The god himself, whose power at the beginning of the rites seemed to be annihilated or diminished, became again a "creator" and a "vanquisher," upon contact with the priest, and at the sound of his powerful creative voice. In his turn, he put his now renewed magic force, creative voice, and fluid of life at the service of the priest. Thus the cult appears to us as an exchange of magic forces and influences, going alternately from the priest over to the god and back again from the god to the priest.[1] This part of the cult has remained closest to the primitive practices of old in which magic and witchcraft held a place more important than mythical belief and prayer. The magician knew so well that the help of his rites and formulæ could not be dispensed with that he sometimes threatened the gods by declaring that he would prevent their cult from being performed.[2]

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[1] Hence the name of offering "that which comes forth at the sound of the voice," *pir khrôou* (Maspero, *La Table d'offrandes des tombeaux égyptiens*, p. 30; A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin*, p. 156).

[2] *Mâ khrôou*, "just of voice," according to Maspero; rather "creator through the voice," according to my opinion; these two explanations are not contradictory, but rather complete each other (*Rituel du culte divin*, p. 163). M. Philippe Virey was the first who proposed, in 1889, the translation of *mâ khrôou* by "he who realises the word, who realises through speech, whose voice or demand brings into reality, makes true, causes the offerings, existing only in painting on the walls of the tomb, to become real, to exist materially" (*Le tombeau de Rekhmarâ*, p. 101, n. 7; p. 149, n. 2. Cf. *Rituel*, p. 152, n. 2). In my opinion, the power of the voice, with the officiating priest, is not limited to the materialisation of the offerings, but is extended to any act performed by the demiurge.

This reciprocal blending of cult and magic explains the prominent part played by certain gods, such as Thot, Horus, Bes, in the magic conjurations mentioned above. The gods themselves, as we have seen, were magicians; especially Thot, the scribe of the gods, the "Wise" in heaven, was worshipped as the "lord of the voice, the master of words and books, the possessor or inventor of the magic scripts which nothing can resist in heaven, on earth, or in Hades."[3] The scrolls chanted by the magicians were the "books of Thot, that the latter wrote with his own hand." No wonder then that the rites invented by the gods were used in their cult for their own safety! What is true of the cult of the gods is equally true of the cult of the dead. The transmission of the "fluid of life" to the mummy, the protection from typhonic animals, the presentation of real or fictitious offerings necessitated the use of magic for the deceased, as well as for the gods. The use of funeral statuettes (*oushaïbtiou*), or "answerers," which placed at the disposal of the deceased a train of servants or substitutes, commissioned to perform for him any labour useful for his material existence after death, is as yet not explainable on any ground other than that of magic, which converted these figures into living beings for the service of the deceased in the other world.[1] But it is especially in the methods of attaining the diverse Paradises that the power of magic is strongly manifested. The deceased appeared for judgment before the tribunal of Osiris, and was forced to answer a series of questions at the gateway of the infernal regions. Yet if he knew the formulæ of salvation and the names of the guardians he had sway over the infernal gods.[1] Whether he was pure or impure mattered little; provided that he was furnished with the protective talismans, and performed the effectual rites, he was sure to be considered good: "Pass on, thou art pure," say the Osirian judges. Paradise was to be obtained by the expert magician rather than by the man in possession of virtue alone. Magic supplanted righteousness and deceived gods as well as men.

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[1] A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin*, p. 221, and following; *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, 160.

[2] Lefébure, *Sphinx*, x, p. 91; viii, p. 27.

[3] Maspero, *Histoire*, i, p. 145.

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[1] Maspero, *Histoire*, i, p. 193.

We touch here upon one of the most important results of this intermingling of magic with the cult of the gods and the dead: magic gave an unstable character to that Egyptian religion which proclaimed under other circumstances so lofty a moral ideal of right and truth. It put falsehood and sincerity on the same level; it enabled the impure or wicked man, who knew how to bind the gods by his charms, to act with impunity.

Popular literature is, therefore, not misleading when it lays insistence on the prominent position which magicians held in Egyptian society: they had the power of life or death, could conjure up the past, make the present secure, and give protection for the future; all nature obeyed them, and, if they desired and commanded, the world might be overturned. This is what was said about the formulæ in the book of Thot: "If thou recitest the first of these formulæ, thou wilt charm heaven, earth, night, mountains, water; thou wilt understand what the birds and reptiles say, thou wilt see the fishes of the abyss, for a divine power will bring them to the surface of the water. If thou recitest the second formula, though thou be in thy grave, thou shalt assume anew the form thou hadst on earth."[1]

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[1] Maspero, *Histoire*, i, p. 184 and following.

Thus, supernatural wonders are but child's play for the magician: to divide the water of a river;[2] to cut off the head of a man and put it in place again, without endangering him;[3] to give life to wax-figures representing a furious crocodile,[4] a fish,[5] a barge and its rowers;[6] to become invisible;[7] to read a sealed letter[8]—all that the "Wise" in Egypt knew how to accomplish, at least so it is related in the stories. Now, several men who really existed (such as Amenôphis, son of Hapi, who under the reign of Amenôphis III was adored during his life and who enjoyed, even in the closing period of ancient Egypt, the reputation of an invincible magician[1]) seem to have possessed, indeed, a power of suggestion and intuition which placed them above and beyond humanity.

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[1] Maspero, *Les contes populaires*, p. xlvii, 108, 113.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 30. [3] P. 34. [4] P. 25. [5] P. 28.

[6] P. 111. [7] P. 153. [8] P. 139.

It is in connection with the Pharaoh that the most famous magicians appear to us. We see them, the "scribes of the double house of life," repairing to the King's council, laden with their scrolls, whenever their advice is needed about things human and divine: here, they have to divert the king by legerdemain,[2] there, they are sent for to give aid to an allied prince;[3] now some foreign magician comes to defy the scribes of the Pharaoh[4] and to challenge them in the way described in *Exodus*.[5]

This might be the place to ask how in ordinary life an individual became a magician. Was this office attained through a supernatural revelation, teaching the incumbent the art of making use of talismans and formulæ? Was it through initiation received from another magician? The texts as yet known explain all magic power as dependent on the possession and knowledge of formulæ; but it is probable that in Egypt, as elsewhere, this knowledge had to be accompanied by a state of particular blessing, resulting from initiation or revelation. Up to the present time, documents are too few and the interpretations that have been given them not sufficiently valid to authorise us to say by whom or by what means the magician was initiated. It is presumable, on the other hand, that the power of the magician became manifest by some material sign. Such a sign, in Australia, is a substance reputed to be magic: a piece of rock-crystal, for instance, which the magician is supposed to have absorbed at the time of his initiation; or, it is the bone of a dead person which is supposed to protect him. According to the texts in the pyramids, the magic (*hikaou*) of an individual is considered as a *material* substance that must be eaten or assimilated in some way, and the presence of which in the body is necessary to confer magic power on the gods, the dead, or the magicians, just as the piece of rock-crystal is considered necessary to the endowment of an Australian sorcerer.[1]

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[1] Maspero, *Histoire*, ii, p. 448.

[2] *Conte du roi Khoufoui et des magiciens* (Maspero, *Contes*, p. 23).

[3] *Conte de la fille du prince de Bakhtan*, p. 16.

[4] 2^e *Conte de Satni Khamoïs*, p. 131.

[5] *Exodus*, vii.

Magic science and the prestige attached to it were to be obtained by arduous poring over books and by leading an exemplary life. The magician had to avoid the temptations of the flesh; ritual purity[1] and chastity[2] were among the conditions of his power. He lived, therefore, beyond humanity, lost in his dreams, his mind wandering and obsessed by the formulæ that give sovereign power: a certain hero of the popular tales, having gained the possession of an all-powerful scroll, "no longer saw nor heard, so constantly did he recite his pure and holy chapter; he no longer approached women, no longer ate meat or fish." Another one "busied himself with nothing else in the world but his roll of magic formulæ, that he unfolded and read before any comer."[3]

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[1] *Cf.* the suggestive study of Mauss: *L'origine des pouvoirs magiques dans les sociétés australiennes*, 1904. For the texts in the Pyramids, cf. *Ounas*, 506, 518; and Lefébure, *Sphinx*, vii, p. 29.

Surrounded by these inspired men, the Pharaoh himself possessed, by intuition, the science which actuated them. As a son of the gods, endowed with supernatural blessings, armed with magic weapons, crowned with animated diadems, in which goddesses were incarnated, his forehead bound with the uræus (the goddess of incantations)[1] the king was the first and the most powerful of magicians. If he so desired, he commanded nature; his shouts, which were like the roaring of the thunder, called forth the storms; the water of the desert sprang forth at his command, and the overflow of the Nile obeyed his decrees. The Pharaoh thus appears to us gifted with the same supernatural and magic powers as the king of the weather, the harvest, the rain, the fire, and the water, still existing in our day among the savages.[2] It is therefore with reason that an official text of the XVIth dynasty thus praises King Ahmes: "The terrors of Thot are beside him; for the god has given him his knowledge of things; it is he who guides the scribes in their doctrines; he is the Great Magician, the master of charms."[3] In the king was the inexhaustible source of the "fluid of life" and of the "magic power"; it was the duty of the "Wise men," assistants of the king, to conduct the course of this magic.

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[1] The text called story of the *Destruction of Men* gives the following indications about the ritual purity of the magician: "He who pronounces these words must anoint himself with balm and pure oil. He must have a censer in his hands, also be anointed with perfume behind his two ears. His lips must be purified with natron. He is clothed with two new garments and he wears wooden shoes. On his tongue is an image of Maît, painted in fresh colours. Whenever Thot wants to read this book to Ra, he purifies himself with purifications lasting nine days. Priest and men must do the same."

[2] G. Maspero, *Contes*, p. 102.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

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[1] A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, p. 284 and following.

[2] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 2d ed., 1900, i, p. 166. Cf. *Sphinx*, vii, p. 167.

[3] Inscription of King Ahmes (*Annales du Service des Antiquités*, iv, p. 28).

The conclusion to be drawn from this brief study is that Ancient Egypt reveals, notwithstanding her very advanced civilisation, a mental state that, in some respects, was still on a level with that of savage peoples. The magician occupied a foremost position because he was the man who observed, who learned, who *knew*. He recognised certain laws, such as that of cause and effect; he noted certain facts of miraculous aspect which are to-day explained by magnetism, suggestion, telepathy. Magic science rests then partly upon accurate observation. The magician was in error in asserting that he had control over these laws and facts, not only in the case of experimental facts observed once and repeated under identical conditions, but also in cases of remote analogy, coming under the definition of *affinity* or *imitation:* when such an assertion is accepted as valid, the "science" of the magician deteriorates into magic. When the magician observes facts truly, we must consider him in the light of a physicist, a chemist, an astronomer, a physician, a psychologist of primitive times; when he leaves the ground of experimental test, he becomes a sorcerer and a necromancer. As the scientific method in Ancient Egypt had not as yet advanced very far, the character of the sorcerer in this dual personality naturally prevailed over that of the physician or the physicist. To give the weight of authority to his sayings the magician drew liberally from mythology; he claimed the patronage of the gods, and, in default of convincing experiences in real life, he quoted divine legends, and these, though unverified, are accepted by popular belief. In a word, we may apply to Egypt the conclusions of Professor Frazer: Magic has only the appearance of science. Yet this is sufficient to explain the strong attraction which magic, like science, has exercised, at all times, over the human mind. Even to-day, it not infrequently happens that the investigator, weary and disappointed, takes refuge in it, as if it were an elevated place, from which he is shown the future, far off, in the dazzling light of a dream.[1]

[1] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 2d ed., 1900, i, pp. 61–62; iii, pp. 458–460.

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